HANDBOOKS IN COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory

Edited by Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler

Volume I

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Volume II

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Volume I

Edited by

Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler

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Introduction

Media and mass communication theory is both a rich field and a potentially frustrating one. Its richness comes in the first place from the fact that the media themselves are so varied, operate under so many different political and cultural systems, and have such ambiguous connections to their various audiences that there is ample opportunity for theory construction and testing. In the second place it comes from the various methodological approaches that have been developed to test theories or to apply different ideological, cultural, economic, psychological, or social theories within the orbit of media. The reality is that the media do not exist as an independent sphere where they can be neatly envisioned and tested within a closed system, but rather they are in continual flux with other elements of the human experience – a state that makes their operations and impacts both elusive and rich. The frustration comes from the same reality. People want to know, and people assume they know, what media are causing in their societies, even when it has proven impossible to demonstrate cause and effect in a way that would satisfy most statisticians – and, even more to the point, there are wide disagreements among theorists as to whether looking for causation is a reasonable enterprise. Some are convinced that this is the only legitimate social scientific approach of any real value – especially if the issue is influencing public policy applied to media – while others are equally convinced that such endeavors are a fool's errand.

What we have tried to do in this two-volume handbook is to explore the varieties of theories that have been developed to deal with issued raised by the operations of media in society. We could have expanded these two volumes into four, or even more, if the theoretical approaches explained here had been applied to situations in even more numerous countries than we have included. But this would have had diminishing returns, and so our plan has been to include enough case studies (applications in different contexts) to give a sense of what is possible theoretically when different contexts are taken into account. As a result, we believe that these two volumes provide a rich set of perspectives that can inform efforts to understand

the media around the globe. We have purposely sought out authors not only from different theoretical traditions, but also from different parts of the world. We wanted to see what theories have developed and have been applied in non-Western contexts, both in order to give them the exposure that they deserve outside the "Western canon" and in order to show how they might inform further theory development in the Western world. We also wanted students of media to recognize that there is still much that we do not know about the relationship of media to society or culture and that there are thus many avenues still open for detailed examinations, speculations, and theory development within their own contexts. Those who read the chapters in these volumes should not assume that this is all there is to say about media. Neither should they assume that this is an idiosyncratic selection of media essays. When we were unable to find someone to write about certain topics, we have taken on the task ourselves, so that we could include theories that we thought would move the whole toward comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, a reader might wish he or she had found here a chapter that is "missing," and we will be the first to admit that this may well be the case. We ask for your indulgence should that occur, and we accept the blame that may be forthcoming for any missing perspectives.

For those of you who wish you had been asked to write, but were not, we wish we had known about your work or application. A reference work of this scope requires far more knowledge of a global theoretical environment than we suspect any of us could hope to achieve. We do think, however, that those scholars we were able to locate from around the planet, and whose work is represented here, all have something valuable to say, and we invite you to explore various options for understanding media and mass communication from their quite different perspectives. We think you will find it a fulfilling use of your time.

We have divided these two volumes into six parts, some containing more chapters than others. We could have filled many volumes with case studies from different parts of the world, but we thought it better to provide illustrative case studies that scholars could use to inform their their own work rather than to have a case study on every possible media subject in every region, country, or culture on the planet. The latter would have been far too cumbersome a project; it would probably discourage many people from even attempting to learn from others, because the task would seem overly daunting and burdensome. We all know how much scholars are expected to keep up with as they attempt to understand this discipline completely. We did not want to create more problems than we solved (assuming we did solve any).

One obvious question in theorizing about media and mass communication is what media to include. The worldwide development of the multiplayer and multinational game World of Warcraft (WOW) is just one example of this problem. Is WOW a medium in its own right or merely an application within the medium we know as the world wide web? Or is it an aspect of the more specific use of the web that we refer to as Web 2.0, or the user-generated web? When the *New York Times*

puts its daily edition on the web, is that two media, or merely one set of content encountered in different ways – perhaps little different from one person sitting at a breakfast table reading the *Times* while drinking his coffee, a second reading it on a commuter train traveling to the city from Long Island, a third sitting on the subway using her tablet to read it, and a fourth using his smart phone for the same purpose. They are all reading, but their contexts are different – and in many cases their devices are different as well. Now the *Times* has videos and blogs on its website. How many media are we actually looking at, then? Again, we have tried to include as much of this complexity as we could without overwhelming the reader. We hope it is not too much to ask those who pick up these volumes to read outside their comfort zone – to look at what those from different theoretical or methodological traditions have to say about this matter we study, which is what John Dewey called "the most wonderful" affair: communication. We have certainly had our comfort zones stretched and have learned immeasurably more from the task of putting this book together than we anticipated. We hope it can have the same result for all of you.

As to the specific content, there are, as we said, six parts. Part I covers what we call classical theories of media and the press and includes attention to history, political economy, symbols and semiotics, media effects, media ecology, dramatistic and ritual theories, propaganda and "technics." This is one of the two longest parts of the book (in terms of number of chapters) and will give every reader a full quiver of possibilities in thinking about the media in specific contexts.

The second part deals with theories about audiences, social construction, and social control. Some theories that you might think belong in the "classical tradition," such as agenda setting and uses and gratifications, are here, and we hope they are useful in helping you see how these theories can be used in contexts outside their original formulations. There are also chapters on the social construction (actually, cultural construction) of news, on the development of identity, and on the relationship between the public, civil society and the public sphere, both in domestic and international settings.

The third part we've called "New Approaches and Reconsiderations." Here you will find feminist theory, postcolonial theory, cultural imperialism, nonviolence, and media policy discussed. You will also find cultivation theory applied in new contexts, and a discussion of globalization and cultural identity.

Part IV is devoted to new technologies. There are chapters on the philosophy of technology and perspectives on its social construction. Social networking, video games, the communication divide, consumption of media with an emphasis on Twitter, and the Internet are all the focus of chapters here.

The fifth part provides case studies from a variety of countries, as well as paying attention to theory development from different religious traditions.

The last part is the shortest: only one chapter. Here is where we try to outline what we think might be future directions for mass communication and media

theory. We could be wrong, of course, as prognostication is a dangerous business. Our approach here is based on all that we have seen in the course of collecting, reading, and editing the fifty or so chapters in this reference book. There is still much work to be done – on virtually all the theoretical concepts covered here. We hope these two volumes can contribute to the worldwide conversation about a rich field for study.

Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler

Part I

Classical Theories of Media and the Press

1

Classical Liberal Theory in a Digital World

Stephen J. A. Ward

The liberal theory of the press believes that news media should be free to report on public issues so that crucial features of liberal society can be maintained, for example the protection of rights such as free speech, or the monitoring of abuses of power. Some theories of the press, such as the authoritarian view, reject the priority of a free press. Others, for instance a communitarian approach, may support the idea of a free press while placing equal, if not greater, stress on other values, such as the creation of community and social solidarity. The liberal theory distinguishes itself, historically and doctrinally, through its enthusiasm for the freedom to speak and to publish. In many cases where press behavior is in question, the liberal theory argues that the freedom to publish trumps other values.[1]

What is "classical" liberal theory, then? Classical liberal theory is libertarian press theory as developed in the nineteenth century. It is "classical" by virtue of being the original liberal theory. Libertarian press theory was the first explicit formulation of liberalism's view of the role of the press in society. In time, other formulations of liberal theory were constructed, until "liberal theory" came to refer to a variety of positions, as it does today. All these positions place emphasis on a free press but differ on the amount of freedom required and on the extent to which other values, such as minimizing harm, should ethically restrain the freedom to publish.

This chapter probes into classical liberal theory by describing its origins and by comparing it with later forms of liberal theory. It also considers its theoretical adequacy today and the question of the form of liberal theory that is most relevant to current discussions about news media.

I begin by outlining the history of the Western free press. I discuss the enthusiasm, among many liberals, for a libertarian press in the 1800s and the subsequent

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disillusionment with libertarian theory as the power of the press grew in the late 1800s and early 1900s. I explain how disillusionment gave birth to modern journalism ethics and to variations on the liberal theory.

I conclude that the best form of liberal theory today is a theory that takes the promotion of deliberative democracy in pluralistic democracies as its guiding aim. I argue that neither the classical liberal theory nor current neolibertarian approaches constitute an adequate theory, because none of these makes deliberative journalism its primary aim.

Origins and Optimism

Challenging the authoritarian system

The history of the Western press has been the subject of many publications, and I have traced the history of journalism ethics (Ward, 2005). Therefore this chapter will not duplicate earlier efforts. Instead I will only outline the main stages that lead to the liberal theory of the press.[2]

This history can be divided into the following stages: (1) seventeenth century: challenge to the authoritarian theory of the press; (2) eighteenth century: creation of a "public" press – a fourth estate that represents the public; (3) nineteenth century: development of a liberal press theory of a libertarian cast; (4) twentieth century to the present: criticism of the libertarian theory, leading to variations in liberal theory and to alternate views.

The seventeenth century is important for understanding the origins of liberal theory because in this period we witness a challenge to the first "theory" of (or approach to) the fledgling periodic news press. This first theory or approach was the authoritarian view of the press, as embraced by monarchs, church officials, the military, and other elite groups. In the twentieth century the authoritarian view evolved into totalitarian and communist views of the press, which saw it as a vehicle of propaganda for the utopian societies envisaged by totalitarian and communist leaders and thinkers. For instance, Lenin regarded the press as a tool in the service of the Communist Party and its revolution and for the prevention of a counter-revolution. Today the authoritarian view is enforced in many nondemocratic or marginally democratic countries such as China, Burma, and Iran.

The authoritarian approach was (and is) the opposite of the liberal theory of the press. The authoritarian view believes that the primary role of the press is to support authority – established power and, in many cases, a rigid, hierarchical society. The press exists not to serve a public, let alone a liberal public of free and equal citizens. It exists to serve the state, identified with a leader or an oligopoly whose aim is to exercise political power and to maintain law and order over "subjects" (not over citizens). On this view, uncensored or unregulated news publications are inherently dangerous to the stability of the state and are therefore regarded as going against the national interest. Publication is not a right of the citizens; it is a

privilege extended to publishers. Establishing who should publish and how is the prerogative of the authorities.

The challenge to this view began slowly. In the early 1600s printer-editors in Amsterdam, London, and other major centers experimented with selling news to the public. They did so carefully, in full view of kings and censors. Gradually editors became bolder. Journalists, originally in England and then in parts of Europe and the United States, began to agitate against the authoritarian system. These pioneering editors should not be confused with the professional and impartial journalists of modern news organizations. They were an eclectic group of religious dissidents, reformist editors, entrepreneurial publishers, government officials, and academics (Ward, 2005, pp. 89–127). Many took up journalism to advance their ideas and their group. Some published illegal broadsheets to challenge absolute monarchs or an established church. Nor were these publishers watchdogs for liberal society. Liberal society did not exist. Liberals did not exist. Many of the early journalists, despite their fiery views, were traditionalists or conservatives.

The authoritarian system was weakened by a two-fold development – a decline in absolute government and the inability of officials to stem the tide of new publications, which in turn stimulated public demand for more publications. It was in England that this weakening of authoritarian control went furthest. A freer English press emerged at times of political turmoil – such as the collapse of central authority during the English Civil War and the periods of strong opposition to the Stuart monarchy. In 1695 the English Parliament allowed the Printing Act to expire. England became the first country in Europe to end the system of licensing (and prior censorship) of the press.

The end of press licensing allowed the newspaper to become a medium for the public sphere emerging with the Enlightenment (Ward, 2005, pp. 128–173). There was in practice an explosion of new types of newspapers in London and across Britain. This freedom was not matched across the Channel, where the press continued to labor under absolute government and strict press controls. Yet in Enlightenment France, for example, monarchs could not repress the growth of papers and journals, although they attempted to control it. No fewer than 1,267 periodic journals were established in France between 1600 and 1789, many dealing with scientific and artistic matters (Burke, 2000, pp. 47–48).

The eighteenth-century idea that newspapers addressed an autonomous "public" and helped to create public opinion – an opinion designed to guide and restrict government – was a new challenge to the authoritarian view. Newspapers claimed to be "tribunes" of the public, and by this they were referring to the Roman tribunes, who spoke for the people. The philosophy of a free press was forged not in philosophy books but in the writings of audacious journalists, in judgments of jurists, in famous conflicts between editors and government, and in the philosophical writings of Hume, Jefferson, Erskine, and Condorcet.

In England, from 1720 to 1723, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon published anonymously, in the *London Journal*, the famous 144 "Cato" letters that railed against "wicked ministers" who "enslave their country." On February 4, 1720,

the fifteenth "Cato" letter presented its famous argument that freedom of the press was "inseparable from public liberty" (Ward, 2005, pp. 152–153). Cato's arguments, republished in the American colonies by Benjamin Franklin, played a role in the 1735 acquittal of John Peter Zenger for criticizing the governor of New York. From the 1760s onward, the clearest demands for freedom to publish come from a new generation of journalists pushing for more far-reaching reform and, in some cases, revolution. The press was aligned against a common enemy: corrupt, unrepresentative, and tyrannical government. In America, Tom Paine campaigned for the "rights of man" and the American Revolution. In England, the liberty of the press was a central issue in the infamous clashes between an unpopular Hanover monarchy and John Wilkes, MP and editor of the London weekly *The North Briton* (Ward, 2005, p. 157). Eventually this freer press played major roles in the American and French revolutions. After the revolutions, the right to free expression and to a free press was made part of the constitutions of America and France.

The start of the nineteenth century, however, seemed to roll back these victories for the press. Napoleon swept across Europe and reinstituted press controls. However, the struggles of the press were part of the liberal movements that sparked revolutions across Europe in 1848 and beyond. By the end of the nineteenth century a substantial "negative liberty" of the press – the right not to be interfered with – would be achieved across most of Europe and North America. In country after country, post-publication press controls and crippling taxes on newspapers were reduced and more liberal societies were established. By the end of the nineteenth century the Western press as a whole could be properly described as a free press.

A libertarian press

The "liberty of the press" was therefore central to debates about the role of the eighteenth-century public press. However, the theory of a fourth-estate "public" press is not the same as the nineteenth-century conception of the press as an agent of liberalism. Two things were missing. First, what was missing was an explicit (and widely accepted) liberal view of society – that is, the notion of a society that exists so that individuals may flourish, and of a society that takes its main duty to be the protection of basic liberties, regarding them as essential to human flourishing. Second, what was missing was the concept of a liberal (or libertarian) press. A libertarian press was not just a relatively free press, but a *maximally* free press. Only in the nineteenth century, with the development of liberalism, did both ideas come to dominate thinking on the press and society. Liberal theory transformed the eighteenth-century idea of a press that represents the public into a more specific and more demanding one: the idea of a maximally free press where liberal views could be advanced.

Libertarian press theory was an extension of liberalism to the press (Siebert, 1956). In economics, liberalism supported the policy of *laissez faire* – a free economic marketplace without excessive government interference. Liberalism also

supported a free marketplace of ideas without government interference. This had direct implications for the news press as part of the marketplace of ideas. Liberals came to believe that only a free press could act as a watchdog on government. There was a "hidden hand" in a marketplace – both one of the economy and one of ideas – that led in the long run to the victory of true and progressive conceptions. This libertarian theory was given its definitive nineteenth-century form by John Stewart Mill and by journalists such as John Delane, C. P. Scott, and Walter Bagehot.

The tenets of liberalism were attractive to publishers and editors. A free marketplace of ideas allowed newspapers of news or opinion to be more frank and robust. Liberalism removed government restrictions on the operations of newspapers. Free trade stimulated economic activity, increasing circulations and advertising.

The result was the libertarian theory of the press. A liberal press was defined as a libertarian press: a maximally unfettered press helping to create a liberal society over and against the forces of tradition and conservatism. A liberal press was a privately owned, self-regulated press that protected individual rights, informed citizens, acted as a watchdog, expressed public opinion to government, and helped oil the economy.

Liberalism produced two types of liberal press, and both types espoused the libertarian theory to a large extent. One type was the elitist liberal newspaper of England – for instance *The Times* of London. Another type was the egalitarian popular press of America, beginning with the penny press of the 1830s. By the end of the 1800s the popular press was dominant on both sides of the Atlantic in the form of a mass commercial press operated by Hearst, Pulitzer, and others. Newspapers were now in the news business; they had the technology to gather, edit, print, and distribute information to thousands of readers – morning, noon, or night. In New York, Pulitzer employed over 1,300 at his *World*, which made profits of $500,000 per annum in the late 1890s (Mott, 1962, p. 546).

It is difficult for us to appreciate the enthusiasm generated by the mass newspaper among many citizens in the late nineteenth century. London commuters in the 1880s fought over newspapers at railway stations. "Newspapers have become almost as necessary to our daily life as bread itself," effused Mason Jackson. The newspaper was not just ubiquitous; it was apparently omnipotent. The newspaper was praised lavishly as an instrument of progress and educator of public opinion. "The true Church of England at this moment lies in the Editors of its newspapers," Thomas Carlyle wrote in 1829. Editor Charles Peabody said that the press "raised the tone of our public life; made bribery and corruption … impossible" (quoted in Ward, 2005, pp. 214–219).

Disillusionment and Ethics

Such was the great liberal hope for the newspaper. Just make the press free and liberal democracy would benefit and improve. Unfortunately the hope was based on three vulnerable assumptions. One: a libertarian press would be, almost automatically,

a serious, public-minded, and progressive press. Two: a free press would approximate a healthy marketplace of ideas, where diverse ideas would be equally represented, in a competition to determine the truth. Three: a free press would construct rational public opinion on issues in the public interest.

The precariousness of these three libertarian assumptions became increasingly evident in the late 1800s as the mass commercial press disappointed even its strongest supporters. A torrent of criticism of the press emerged at the start of the twentieth century.

The hope that an unregulated press would be a responsible educator flagged as the commercial press was accused of being sensationalist and of spending its editorial resources on anything from high-society scandals to racetrack results. The hope that an unregulated press would approximate a healthy marketplace of ideas was damaged by the growing concentration of media ownership in the hands of press barons who favored certain viewpoints. The hope that a free press would create rational opinion from the perspective of the common good (or of the public interest) was questioned in view of these trends in media ownership, but also in view of trends in advertising and public relations. The hope that a free press would be an independent voice for the public good was undermined by an increasing dependency on profits and advertisers. Also, the ability of a free press to construct rational opinion was questioned as a result of a growing awareness that reporters' stories were distorted by manipulative forces in the public sphere, such as the growing number of public relations agents. People began to believe that the press manipulated public opinion for the benefit of the most powerful groups in society (Ward, 2005, pp. 227–229).

Moreover, a libertarian approach to the press seemed increasingly out of sync with social developments in liberal democracies. The emergence of pluralistic societies demanded a liberalism that went beyond libertarianism. Pluralistic societies encouraged the development of a "social" liberalism that stressed not just liberty, but also equality and opportunity. Social liberalism endorsed government programs designed to create equal opportunity among citizens and groups. Under such social conditions, it was not enough for journalists to appeal to their freedom to publish on libertarian grounds; that very power to publish was under question. Perhaps their freedom enflamed tensions between groups, supported racism, and ignored dramatic inequalities among social classes. Journalists were now being asked to publish in a restrained and responsible manner, so as to not enflame social tensions or misrepresent minorities.

The result was disillusionment with the libertarian theory of the press and its attempt to make the freedom to publish the sole (or dominant) value of a philosophy of journalism.

But what was to be done about the situation?

There were two responses, both of which developed over the twentieth century. Journalists turned to ethics to retain public confidence in the free press. They constructed an explicit professional ethics for journalism, which restrained and guided the freedom to publish. At the same time, scholars constructed variations of liberal theory or proposed alternatives to it.

The turn to ethics occurred between the 1880s and the 1920s. Journalists in the United States and elsewhere created a modern professional ethics for their rapidly changing craft. Journalists formed themselves into professional associations. Across America, state and national associations such as the Society of Professional Journalists wrote codes of ethics that stressed professionalism, independence, truth seeking, and objectivity (Ward, 2005, pp. 204–213). Ethics was conceived of as a set of principles that journalists would voluntarily honor as a form of self-regulation. What needed to be regulated was what journalists had long fought for – their negative liberty; their freedom to publish. Ethics dealt with how journalists should *use* their freedom responsibly, and that meant imposing restraints on what they should publish and on how they should publish it.

The project of ethics and the wider task of reimagining the role of the press extended beyond the ranks of journalism. Members of the new academic disciplines of mass communication and media ethics joined the chorus for an ethical "repair" of the press. Ethicists, media scholars, and others began to write extensively on the social responsibilities of a free press. High-level public commissions of inquiry in Britain, Canada, and the United States studied the state of the free press and its responsibilities.

The project of ethics worked against the original impulse of libertarian theory. New principles and aims were proposed at every turn, leaving far behind the minimalist approach of libertarianism. *Nothing* like this – a system of media ethics with ever increasing duties and social concerns – had been envisaged by the partisan journalists who fought for a free press in the eighteenth century or by libertarians in the nineteenth century. Clearly the classical liberal theory of the press had failed.

Variations on a Liberal Theme

Of special importance to the history of classical theory was the construction of two new models of the press in the first half of the twentieth century: (1) the professional objectivist theory and (2) the social responsibility theory of the press. Both models continue today to form the basis of professional journalism ethics and of intellectual discussions about press and society.

While both models are liberal in defending liberty of expression, they balance the freedom to publish with other values and considerations. They call for impartial and balanced reporting. They call on the press to fulfill important social functions such as providing a forum for all groups in society. Rather than simply talk about the importance of freedom for journalists, both theories ask about the role of the press from the perspective of the public. What sort of press do citizens need in a democracy? The belief underlying both models was that the current stress on the freedom of the press was not misplaced, but it was exaggerated or the freedom was over-emphasized. Freedom to publish was over-emphasized when it was made the sole principle of journalism, always trumping other values.

It was over-emphasized when journalists could use libertarian ideas to ignore other social values such as providing objective information, minimizing the harm of reporting, and representing social groups fairly.

Advocates of both models believed that the defects of a libertarian press would be addressed by a self-regulating commitment to journalism ethics that emphasized objective reporting and by a press that fulfilled certain social responsibilities. In being objective and in being socially responsible, the journalist would have to use her freedom to publish in certain prescribed ways. The very idea of prescription and "duty" was, and is, anathema to classical libertarian theory. Undaunted by libertarian criticism, the new liberal theories thought that the freedom to publish could be highly valued, yet also restrained by other values. To ask for a responsible press was not a return to an authoritarian or nonliberal view: the press could be free and responsible at the same time.

From the early 1900s to the middle of the twentieth century, the professional objectivist model, defined by a commitment to news objectivity and to the public good, became a major liberal alternative to libertarian theory. Objectivity in reporting became a dominant ethical ideal for mainstream newspapers in the United States, Canada, and beyond, although it was less popular in Europe (Ward, 2005, pp. 214–219). By the 1920s, major journalism associations in the United States had adopted formal codes that called for objectivity in reporting, independence from government and business influence, and a strict distinction between news and opinion. The result was an elaborate set of newsroom rules aiming to ensure that journalists reported "just the facts" (Mindich, 1998; Schudson, 1978).

The press theory behind the professional objectivist model was that the best role for journalists to play in the marketplace of ideas was that of an impartial reporter. The libertarian model conceived of the journalist as part of the marketplace of ideas, as one of its voices and one of its partisan advocates. In the clash of partisan voices, the truth would eventually win out. The professional objectivist model rejected this libertarian model, especially concerning news reporters. What liberal democracies needed from their press was not partisan reporting and advocacy. There were plenty of partisan groups in society already, and the public didn't know whom to believe or trust. Therefore the role of the reporter should be to stand *among* the contending groups in the marketplace and to report fairly and objectively on what these groups say and do. The reporter was not part of any of the contending groups. She was not *with* any group, and objectivity required the reporter to restrain from expressing her biases.

Another liberal response was social responsibility theory (Peterson, 1956), developed by scholars and journalists in the United States. By the early 1900s, many publishers and editors had come to recognize the idea of press responsibility and the fact that the press had a number of important functions to fulfill in a democracy, such as accurate reporting. But social responsibility theorists argued that the liberal press did not fulfill these acknowledged duties in practice. In fact the press more often than not neglected its responsibilities. In the United States, the Hutchins Commission into the Freedom of the Press in the late 1940s gave

the theory a clear and popular formulation. In its report, *A Free and Responsible Press*, the commission stressed that the main function of the press was to provide "a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account" of the news and events and "a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism." The press should provide a "representative picture of the constituent groups in society," and assist in the "presentation and clarification of the goals and values of society," and "provide full access to the day's intelligence" (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, pp. 21–28). If journalistic self-regulation failed, social responsibility proponents warned that government regulators might intervene. Today the ideas of social responsibility theory have "won global recognition over the last 50 years," for example in European public broadcasting (Christians & Nordenstreng, 2004, p. 4). Moreover, the theory continues to provide a basic vocabulary for new ethical approaches such as feminist and communitarian theories. The theory also provides standards by which press councils and the public can evaluate media performance.

While the objectivist and social responsibility theories opposed libertarian views, two other approaches disagreed with making objectivity the guiding principle of a liberal press. These two approaches were *interpretationism* and *activism*. Both views understood the aim of journalists to be not a neutral objectivity but something more active and committed. The tradition of interpretive journalism saw the role of the liberal journalist primarily as one of explaining the significance of events; the tradition of activist journalism saw it as one of reforming society. The interpretive and the activist traditions believe that journalists have a duty to be more than stenographers of official facts.

However, this stress on an active, nonobjective press is not new. For most of modern journalism's history, journalists have been openly partisan, and their reporting has been biased towards political parties and funders. However, in the early 1900s, a less partisan interpretive journalism arose that sought to rationally and independently explain an increasingly complex world. For instance, Henry Luce's interpretive journalism was the model for *Time* magazine in the 1920s. In the 1930s and beyond, scholars, foreign reporters, and journalism associations acknowledged the need to supplement objective reporting with an informed interpretation of world events, wars, and economic disasters like the Great Depression (MacDougall, 1957). Newspapers in the 1930s and 1940s introduced weekend interpretations of the past week's events, beat reporters, and interpretive columnists with bylines. This tradition of interpretive journalism would gather strength in the second half of the twentieth century in the hands of broadcast journalists, literary journalists, and then online journalists.

Meanwhile, from the 1960s onward, activist journalists defined "informing the public" as challenging the status quo, opposing wars, and promoting social causes. Activist journalists sought to organize public opinion against government and private sector misconduct and against unjust or unwise policies. Modern activist journalists were anticipated historically by the reform journalists of the late eighteenth century in England and by the revolutionary journalists in America and France. Activist journalists also share many values with the muckraking magazine

journalists in America during the first two decades of the 1900s (Filler, 1968). In the 1990s American journalists advocated a moderate reform journalism called "civic journalism," which saw the journalist as a catalyst for civic engagement (Rosen, 1996).

Today many journalists see themselves as some combination of informer, interpreter, and advocate. Traditional values, such as factual accuracy, are not completely jettisoned. Even the most vocal muckrakers or activist journalists insist that their reports are factually accurate, although they reject neutrality (Miraldi, 1990). Rather they see their facts as embedded in interpretive narratives that draw conclusions. For both interpretive and activist journalism, the main ethical questions are: What are its norms and principles, if objectivity is not the ideal? What ethical theory can restrain the possible abuses or excesses of nonobjective journalism?

Thinking about press theory in the twentieth century also produced several interesting viewpoints, which stray far enough from the heart of liberal theory to be called alternative theories of the press, and not just an extension of liberal theory. Many of the holders of these theories are critical of liberal theory, especially in its libertarian form. One alternative view is communitarian media ethics (Christians, Ferre, & Fackler, 1993); another is a feminist ethics of care (Gilligan, 1982; Koehn, 1998; Noddings, 1984).

Both theories emphasize the principles of building community and of minimizing harm as embodiments of significant ethical restraint on the freedom to publish. The liberal perspective stresses individual freedoms and rights; the communitarian and care perspectives stress the impact of journalism on communal values and on caring relationships. Communitarian media ethicists such as Clifford G. Christians use the primacy of "humans-in-relation" to argue that the main function of the press is not a "thin" liberal informing of citizens about facts and events. Its main function is the provision of a rich interpretive dialogue with and among citizens that aims at "civic transformation" (Christians, 2006, pp. 65–66).

The communitarian approach is close in spirit to theories of care developed by feminists and other scholars. The promotion of caring human relationships as an essential part of human flourishing is a primary principle (Card, 1999; Pierce, 2000). Feminists promoted an ethics of care "founded on notions of community rather than in the rights-based tradition" (Patterson & Wilkins, 2002, p. 292). Gilligan (1982) criticized the moral development theory of Lawrence Kohlberg for ignoring gender.

An ethics of care attempts to restrain a news media that is often insensitive to story subjects and sources. As Jay Black has written, feminist scholars have argued that, if attention is paid to the tenets of an ethics of care, "a fuller, richer media system may emerge, one that can and will consider such concepts as compassion, subjectivity, and need" (Black, 2006, p. 99). Ethicists have applied an ethics of care to cases in journalism, such as formulaic coverage of murders in Canada and the United States (Fullerton & Patterson, 2006). Steiner and Okrusch (2006) have argued that the idea of professional responsibility in journalism can be reinterpreted in terms of caring.

So what is liberal theory by the end of the twentieth century?

It consists of two branches of theory. The first is a libertarianism branch – the original liberal formulation – with a strong, and almost exclusive, emphasis on the freedom of individuals and journalists to publish whatever they want or believe to be true, unrestricted by undue concerns about the consequences of such publications, such as offending certain groups. Partisanship is not restricted. About the only restraints the libertarian approach would accept are the laws of libel and laws against inciting violence. On this view, journalists do not have a duty (ethical or legal) to make sure their reports and opinions are carefully vetted, objective, fair, or balanced; they do not have a duty to include alternative views in their writing or to create a forum of views. It may be laudable (or optional) that journalists wish to follow the professional objectivist model or the norms of social responsibility theory, but there is no ethical or legal duty for anyone to do so. No one should be censored or legally harassed because their publications are offensive, unbalanced, or nonobjective or because they lack a civil tone. The libertarian resistance to talk of ethical duties is based on fear that it will lead to tepid, "politically correct" journalism and will endorse restrictions on freedom of speech. As for what society needs from its press, the libertarian responds that all it needs is a free marketplace of ideas. The old idea that in the long run the marketplace will be good for a free society undergirds the libertarian position. Just have a free and diverse marketplace of journalism, and one has a free and democratic press.

The second branch consists of views – from the professional objectivist model to social responsibility theory – that reject libertarianism as an adequate liberal philosophy of the press. What democracy requires is a free *and* responsible press. Freedom to publish is one but not the only principle for a democratic press. With objectivist and socially responsible models, the idea of press ethics takes root.

By the end of the 1900s, "liberal theory" becomes an umbrella concept that covers several views of the press in society. They are similar in that they make the freedom to publish a fundamental value. They differ in how much emphasis they place on that freedom and in the degree to which (and ways in which) they are willing to restrain that freedom for the public good. "Classical liberal theory" remains a phrase reserved for the libertarian theory of the press. Insofar as "liberal theory" now denotes a range of perspectives, attacks on liberal theory as libertarian do not necessarily apply to other forms of liberal theory.

Liberal Theory Today

The preceding overview of freedom of the press, libertarianism theory, and responses to libertarianism leads to a difficult question: What *is* an adequate philosophy for today's global multimedia, where journalism has migrated, in large part from newspapers to the Internet? Can liberal theory of any kind be an adequate philosophy? Do we need to look for new, nonliberal theories of press and society?

In the rest of this chapter I argue against libertarianism and advocate a deliberative liberal theory as the most plausible ideal theory for democratic journalism. A commitment to deliberation in a pluralistic society requires journalists to adopt certain restraints and uses of their freedom to publish that are not part of libertarian theory. I argue that classical liberal theory is an inadequate theory of the press today, just as it was inadequate a century ago.

The question of adequacy begs a theory of democracy. What sort of democracy are we talking about? And what is a democratic press? Once we get clear on these questions, we can better assess the adequacy of existing liberal theories.

My stress on asking about a democratic press may strike some as odd. Isn't a free press, by definition, a democratic press? Many people, not just libertarians, assume that a free press and a well-functioning democracy are inseparable in the same way in which we sometimes assume liberalism is identical with democracy. But those assumptions are tenuous. Liberalism led to democracy, but they are not identical. Many liberals in the past were not democrats. Similarly, a free press can support democracy, and it may even be considered an essential feature of democracy. Yet a free press and a democratic press are not identical. The technology of publishing is a tool that can be used in many ways, and a free press may not be used to promote democracy. A free press could be on the side of monopolies of power, or elites. A free press could support laws that erode individual liberties, such as draconian security laws, or laws that discriminate against certain minorities. Or a free press may be debased by ranters and irresponsible commentators who polarize the discussion of issues and thereby undermine democratic deliberation. A free press is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a democratic press. Therefore it is always possible to ask: To what extent is our free press democratic? The identity between a free press and a democratic press wasn't obvious to the critics of the free commercial press more than a century ago. Why should it be today?

Despite such obvious facts, confidence in the identity of a free press and a democratic press has grown of late, not declined, because of the Internet, which appears to create a new and more dynamic marketplace of ideas. A libertarian attitude has been used to argue for freedom of expression on the Internet and to celebrate the many "voices" online. Social media enthusiasts and a good number of online writers have become the new libertarians. I call them the libertarians of the Net. Like libertarians in the past, these new libertarians believe that the public sphere requires primarily – or only – free online media where the powers to publish and to access information are available to many citizens. This neoliberalism contends that criticism of the classical liberal theory in the twentieth century – the concentration of media, the influence of advertising – are overcome by the emergence of the Internet and the "democratization" of media. The Internet allows a healthy marketplace of ideas to come into existence. Therefore we can return to libertarianism and neglect a former concern with professional objectivist ethics, which was based on the existence of a powerful mainstream press and an unequal marketplace of ideas. The restraints of journalism ethics are not especially relevant for cyberspace.

There is also a second source of neolibertarianism. This is the rise of a more partisan press in the United States and other countries. For example, in the United States political groups and foundations are financing web sites that purport to do journalism – a journalism that supports their partisan causes and revels in a sort of "in-your-face" partisan style. Both the partisan funding and the tough partisan tone of much of the journalism are justified by libertarian ideas – that such journalism is giving voice to points of view that the public needs to hear. The clash of partisan voices is justified by that old standby of libertarian philosophy: the long-term benefits of a robust marketplace of ideas.

This neolibertarianism – both the libertarianism of the Net and the libertarianism of partisan journalism – poses one of the clearest and strongest challenges to media ethics today and needs to be countered by deliberative liberal theory.

Deliberative liberal theory

A free press is a press that enjoys a substantial negative freedom. It is relatively unfettered by government and law in its news gathering and publications. A democratic press is a free press that, in principle and in fact, advocates for and substantially advances democracy. By democracy I mean a constitutional liberal democracy. A constitution is a social contract that defines the terms by which different groups can peacefully and fairly coexist, enjoying the benefits of cooperation. A constitution, among other things, balances freedom and justice. It protects basic liberties for all, while making sure the pursuit of liberty by any individual or group is restrained by justice and the law. For example, a constitutional regime places restrictions on what majorities can do to minorities, by not allowing a majority vote in a legislature to violate a basic liberty or right. A liberal democratic constitution is, or should be, rooted not just in liberty, but also in equality and justice. Moreover, a liberal democracy should be both participatory and deliberative. Citizens not only vote but can meaningfully participate in public deliberations. Also, they have opportunities to enter into deliberation with other citizens of different views. A deliberative liberal theory asks if the press is democratic in this sense: To what degree does the press, individually and as a whole, contribute to this ideal of liberal democracy as a participatory and deliberative structure for dealing with public issues? On this view, the best press philosophy is deliberative liberal theory, where the freedom to publish is seriously concerned with encouraging deliberative democracy. What is distinctive about deliberative liberal theory is its belief that the most important press values are to be explained and justified with reference to democracy. Journalists have a positive duty to promote deliberation. They cannot be satisfied with simply defending their negative liberty, making sure it is not interfered with when they express their views.

It is in this area – the promotion of deliberation – that deliberative liberal theory finds libertarianism wanting. Libertarianism may promote participation, but it does not promote deliberation. From a strict libertarian perspective, journalists and citizens who publish news and viewpoints often do not, and have no duty to, make

deliberation their primary aim. Their primary aim is to express their own views in whatever fashion they prefer, and to use whatever communication methods are necessary to have those views win political support.

To see the distinctiveness of deliberative press theory, we need to distinguish between two different models of democracy: participatory and deliberative (Held, 1996, p. 4). Participatory democracy refers to a form of democracy going back to classical Athens, where citizens gathered together and voted on political questions. However, the phrase as I am using it refers more to a form of democracy defined by writers from the 1970s onward, for instance in the works of Carole Pateman (1970) and of C. B. Macpherson (1977). These writers complained that liberals – read libertarians – had not paid sufficient attention to how inequalities of class, sex, and race hinder active participation in contemporary democracy. Such inequalities limit the extent to which citizens can claim to be free and equal.

These views have implications for what democracy requires of its free press. It requires the press to provide diverse and accessible channels for public communication. Here is where the libertarians of the Net have a valid point. The Internet and new forms of communication *do* provide better public access to the public sphere, better means for the expression of views, and new opportunities for citizen to participate in debate. The political value of the "new media" is the many voices now online.

Praise for the democratization of media via the Internet rests on a participatory model of democracy. It is said that the new media have created a "democratic media" movement, where citizens are no longer passive consumers of news but actively help to shape the news and public discussion. Journalist Dan Gillmor's influential book *We the Media* argues, in the subtitle, that the new media allow "*Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*" (Gillmor, 2004). Of course, there are good and bad uses of the new media. Cell phones and Twitter can help citizens report election abuses in developing countries, or they can be used to spread malicious gossip. Writers like Gillmor emphasize the positive, not the negative potential of new media.

This enthusiasm for new media takes a wrong turn when it becomes a libertarian viewpoint that thinks that ethical standards that restrain the freedom to publish are not relevant to the wired world and not central to democracy. Is a high level of citizen participation in media all that is needed for democratic media? Another model of democracy, deliberative democracy, contends that the answer to this question is no. Participatory media are not sufficient to create democratic media. What is missing from the participatory model of democracy is the notion of deliberation. Deliberation is more than simply participating in public communication and discourse; it is a special and important way of participating. Philosopher Michael Walzer (1999, p. 58) defined deliberation as

> a particular way of thinking: quiet, reflective, open to a wide range of evidence, respectful of different views. It is a rational process of weighing the available data, considering alternative possibilities, arguing about relevance and worthiness, and then choosing the best policy or person.

Democratic journalists and citizens approach public discussion differently. The aim is not simply to express my view; it is not to portray those who disagree with me as unpatriotic enemies who must be crushed. This is not a winner-takes-all affair. Deliberation is not a monologue; democratic discourse is social and cooperative. It is about listening, learning. It expects robust disagreement, but it also seeks areas of compromise and new solutions. Democratic journalism challenges character assassination, flimsy facts, and loaded language like "socialist." Democracy is about how we speak to each other, engaging in a public reason. It needs the democratic virtues of tolerance and reciprocity, and the glorious ability of humans to transcend their perspective. When fundamental issues threaten to confuse and divide us, it is time for democratic journalism, which works through objective and deliberative public journalism. Without this type of democratic journalism a reasonable public cannot come into existence.

Democracy is not based simply on the freedom to express oneself on the topics of the day. How one expresses oneself and how one interacts with others who also wish to express themselves is crucial. In other words, how citizens use their new and increasing freedom to publish is as important as the fact that they now have such media capabilities. The same question that dogged professional journalists – how will you use your freedom for democracy – can now be asked of citizens.

Deliberative democracy argues that citizen participation in the media or elsewhere in society must aim to be deliberative. The problem with modern democracy is not only that too many citizens are not able to participate in their society in equal measure with other citizens. The problem is that the mode of participation is often nondeliberative. News media are thought to be part of this growing non-deliberative public sphere, resorting as they do to "hot talk" radio shows, eight-second sound bites, and a blurring of news and entertainment. The trend, then, is away from deliberation, which is the key to wiser and more inclusive decisions.

Applied to news media, deliberative democracy becomes the ultimate goal of a free press. News media have positive duties to create deliberative spaces in the public sphere. They should offer programs on current issues that encourage deliberative exchanges among people of differing views. Without a public culture of deliberation, without institutional practices and media coverage that encourages citizens to come together to deliberate, democracy declines into the irrational rule of the insufficiently informed, whose desires and views are the result of manipulation by powerful elites who distort and dominate channels of communication. Only under conditions of deliberative democracy can we speak about the free and reasonable agreement among citizens, and of rational public opinion.

This is the deliberative liberal idea of the press.[3] Free expression and citizen participation in media are necessary but not sufficient conditions for democracy or democratic journalism. Our society may be a communicative society of the highest order. It has more accessible forms of communication for sharing information than were present at any other time in history. Yet it may still fail to be a deliberative democracy. It may be a society where nondeliberative exchanges are the norm and the most important factor in political decisions.

The reasons that caused citizens to become skeptical of nineteenth-century libertarianism are the same reasons why we should be skeptical of neoliberalism today. In any era, a marketplace of ideas can be limited and dominated. Although Internet access has grown globally, it still covers only a third of the world's population. The Internet also allows monopolies of information. For instance, many of the most popular news sites in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Britain belong to mainstream news media – the same companies that dominate traditional news media. Globally, about a dozen Western conglomerates dominate the world of media, film, and similar cultural products (McChesney, 2009). Nor does the democratization of media lead necessarily to greater deliberation or concord among the participating citizens. The lovely idea of many voices connected globally ignores the plain fact that the world is anything but Marshall's McLuhan's global village. A media-linked world can create great tensions among cultures.

The celebration of a diversity of voices online has little to say about whose voices these are and how such voices have to interact in order to address issues democratically. It says nothing about the type of information available for discussion, the obstacles put up by governments to free speech, or the selfish (or intolerant) attitudes that can thwart attempts at fruitful online discussion. Conversation, offline or online, may lead nowhere – or somewhere. It may promote informed rational opinion or emotional shouting. Moreover, the issues that confront countries in a global world, from climate change to healthcare reform, are so complex that deliberation and study are needed, not just random exchanges of views. Organized, reasoned debate, not ideological ranting or simplistic analysis, is desperately needed in public communication. To make things worse, many powerful agents have a stake in how public discussion turns out. Millions of dollars are spent on attempting to influence and manipulate public deliberation. To assume that interactivity is by itself sufficient for democracy is as naïve as thinking, in the late 1800s, that a mass commercial press was the answer to the woes of democracy.

From a deliberative democracy perspective, there is still a role for critical, well-informed, and fair journalists to play in objectively informing citizens and critically directing the conversation. Against the libertarians, deliberative democrats argue that the nature of today's public sphere rules out a rejuvenated *laissez faire* attitude, which thinks that simply getting more voices to connect is the answer. We need to deliberately use media in democratic ways, not to assume that democratic discourse and wise choices will happen.

Conclusion

This chapter has used historical analysis and philosophical argument to make the following four points:

1 *Idea of classical theory* Classical liberal theory of the press is best viewed as one form of liberal theory: the original libertarian theory of the press formulated in

the heyday of nineteenth-century libertarianism. Therefore there is a distinction between "classical" liberal theory and liberal theory per se. The later includes a variety of forms of liberal theory.

2 *Disillusionment with classical theory* Beginning in the late 1800s, various forms of liberal theory were constructed due to disillusionment with the adequacy of libertarian press theory. The idea that a free press was sufficient for democracy was questioned as the free press became powerful, owner-concentrated, and influenced by business interests, advertisers, and public relations specialists. Two of the responses to these problems were the liberal-minded professional objectivist model of journalism and the social responsibility theory of the press.

3 *Rise of neolibertarianism* Classical liberal theory remains alive today in the form of a neolibertarianism of the Internet and of a neolibertarianism espoused by increasing numbers of partisan public communicators. This neolibertarianism is no more adequate today as a press philosophy for pluralistic democracies than the classic libertarianism was a century ago.

4 *Deliberative liberal theory* The most plausible liberal theory for today's global, media-linked world is a theory that makes the construction of deliberative media spaces a central duty of a free and democratic press. The duty to promote democratic deliberation goes beyond the libertarians' belief that the freedom to publish and the opportunity to participate in today's media are sufficient for democracy.

The debate between libertarians, objectivists, media ethicists, and advocates of social responsibility theory is in large part a debate among liberals, if we define liberals as believers in a society dedicated to the protection of a core of basic liberties, including the freedom to publish. All of these debaters are opposed to clear examples of nonliberal press theory, such as the authoritarian view. But the differences within the liberal camp leave much room for more study, more discussion, and more theoretical development.

Notes

1 Some of the ideas in this chapter appeared in previous publications such as Ward 2005 and Ward 2011.

2 Much of this history is in Ward 2005, especially Chs. 3–6.

3 Today it is probably better to talk not about the "press" but about "news media," or some description that includes non-mainstream bloggers and Internet citizen journalists.

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2

The Origins of Media Theory
An Alternative View

Robert S. Fortner

Given the long period of development of the media, if one takes Johannes Gutenberg's creation of movable type in 1455 as the starting point, it may seem odd that theorizing about the significance of media should not have occurred in any systematic way until the 1930s. There had been "understandings" about the press before that, of course, even philosophical claims about its role or significance going back at least as far as John Milton's *Aereopagitica* in 1644, which argued for the rescission of the British Parliament's licensing order that created official censors to approve any work for publication. And there had also been theories about the significance of persuasion to political and public life that found their roots in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Newspapers had appeared in the early 1600s, and by the middle of the nineteenth century they had reached mass audiences as a result of price reductions and of the development of advertising; the latter was a source of significant revenue for the populist press, which presented crime, corruption, and gore to eager readers. But there was no systematic theorizing about the significance of the press and the media, no disciplined speculation based on detailed analysis – not until radio became a mass medium and the world had fought one world war and seemed to be heading toward another as fascism and communism arose in Europe. We could reasonably ask: What took so long?

One reason – a controversial one according to the literature – is that the development of the printing press, and then of newspapers, did not in itself create a literate public. Unfortunately the evidence for the development of literacy in both Europe and the Americas is scanty at best, and the definitions of what constituted literacy are in dispute. The most common definition of literacy at the time reduced it to the ability to sign one's name; but, since people usually learned to write after they learned to read (and then only printed material, not cursive writing),

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interpreting or extrapolating from the extant evidence is suspect. Laura Caroline Stevenson, using the evidence from "three oaths and vows taken and signed by every man in England over eighteen years of age in 1642–44," claims that "adult male literacy in these two years was a little over 30% in rural areas, with a slightly higher average in towns," although this figure fluctuated widely from one parish to another (Stevenson, 1984, p. 55). Stevenson suggests that there was a general rise in literacy among all social classes during Elizabeth I's reign, although at different rates and at different times, and that afterwards, during the reigns of James and Charles, some social groups' total literacy actually declined (Stevenson, 1984, p. 56).

> Once literacy reached a certain point, it could expand no further without a change in economic and cultural conditions; further dramatic rises in literacy did not occur until the end of the seventeenth century (when, perhaps not entirely by chance, a new kind of literature appealing to tradesmen began to appear). (Stevenson, 1984, p. 57)

In other words, necessity was the mother of literacy, as those who were learning to read (and write) did so because they needed reading in their work. Indeed James Collins and Richard Blot (2003) rightly note that only tiny groups of elites were literate up until the late nineteenth century. François Furet and Jacques Ozouf (1981, p. 215), for instance, write that the French people "were practically fully literate" a century after the French Revolution of 1789. Literacy, in their view, developed differently in different social strata: the old kingdom's elites were reading, writing, and counting by the seventeenth century, merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, tenant farmers, and rich peasants progressed to literacy in the eighteenth century, and wage laborers finally became literate in the nineteenth century (Furet & Ozouf, 1981, p. 216). Female literacy lagged significantly behind male literacy for this entire period, as most women at that time were not engaged in the public trading, contracting, and accounting of tradesmen and businessmen. They didn't "need" to be literate. David Cressy's analysis in one diocese of Norwich, England shows that, while members of the clergy and of the professions were entirely literate by 1700, 79 percent of husbandmen, 85 percent of laborers, and 89 percent of women were illiterate (Cressy, 1981, p. 108). From the extant records it appears, then, that literacy developed over a 400-year period after the invention of the printing press.

The second reason for a delay in the development of theories of the press and mass communication was that there was no "mass." This was partly due to illiteracy, to be sure, but at least three other factors were at work as well. These factors were theological, economic, and psychological. The theological issues had to do with who counted as a person. Although the Reformation had claimed that people didn't require the intervention of priests to understand scripture, as its meaning was clear to a "priesthood of all believers," the social conditions of the fifteenth century and down to the middle of the eighteenth were such that most people simply didn't count as persons. Slavery and serfdom clearly eliminated some

people from consideration, as did assumptions about the rationality or intellectual capacities of women. As Bullough, Shelton, and Slavin put it (1988, p. 1), "[a]s individuals, with few exceptions, women were not counted as important." Even after the middle of the nineteenth century, these scholars explain, after the original biblical justifications for male dominance in society had been challenged, "social charter myths" were used to justify continued male supremacy. Sir Henry Maine and J. J. Bahofen "developed theories [in books published in 1861] that helped perpetuate myths about the importance of male dominance" (Bullough, Shelton, & Slavin, 1988, p. 4). One indication of the "place" of women – who constituted better than half the human race – was the late granting of the voting franchise. One argument against women's suffrage, published in 1869, outlined the differences between the sexes thus:

> The man is taller and more muscular, has a larger brain, and a longer stride in his walk. The woman is lighter and shorter, and moves more gracefully. In physical strength the man is greatly superior, and the bass in his voice and the shag on his face, and the swing and sway of his shoulders, represent a personality in him that has some attribute of thunder. But there is no look of thunder in the woman. Her skin is too finely woven, too wonderfully delicate to be the rugged housing of thunder … Glancing thus upon man, his look says, Force, Authority, Decision, Self-asserting Counsel, Victory … They are yet one species, but if they were two, they would be scarcely more unlike. (Bushnell, 1869, pp. 50–51)

There were, of course, refutations of such arguments (see, for instance, Dilke, 2011). Nevertheless, the arguments against women's suffrage held sway in the United States until 1920. As the United States considered the necessity of joining World War I, "opponents of the suffrage movement put forth the age-old argument that a woman's place was in the domestic sphere, unburdened by political matters and defined by the leadership of fathers, husbands, and brothers" – writes Katie Marsico (2011, p. 10). With 50 percent or more of a nation's population excluded from political engagement, the development of a "mass public" was constrained until such time as the nature of humanity – those with "equal rights" – grew to encompass women. Similarly, those who were slaves or, later, freed slaves were not considered part of the political landscape. Perhaps the most obvious evidence for this fact was the calculation on the basis of which a slave was defined in the US Constitution as constituting three fifths of a person for purposes of political representation.

The economic issue was simply one of disposable income, along with the costs associated with the purchase of books, newspapers, or other printed materials. Although there is ample evidence that illiterates were able to listen in on the news both in the printed press and in ephemera such as letters from abroad (see Fortner, 1978), it is still true that full participation as members of a body politic would have been enhanced by literacy – perhaps except for the fact that most people would have been unable to invest in materials to read. In England, from the onset of the Black Plague in 1349, real wages did not return to their pre-Plague levels

until the 1880s (Clark, n.d., p. 2). From 1264 on, productivity remained static for nearly 500 years (Clark, n.d., p. 2). One contemporary account, written in 1884, at the end of this period, having surveyed the wages paid to various artisans, peasants, and other workers, nevertheless concludes optimistically:

> It may be well the case, and there is every reason to fear it is the case, that there is collected a population in our great towns which equals in amount the whole of those who lived in England and Wales six centuries ago; but whose condition is more destitute, whose homes are more squalid, whose means are more uncertain, whose prospects are more hopeless than those of the poorest serfs of the middle ages and the meanest drudges of the medieval cities. (Rogers, 2001, p. 185)

Only 75 years after the onset of the Industrial Revolution in England in 1775, the living conditions of those in British cities had become so bad that this country was compared to "darkest Africa": "the stony streets of London, if they could but speak, would tell of tragedies as awful, of ruin as complete, of ravishments as horrible, as if we were in Central Africa …" (Booth, 1890, p. 13). There were those, of course, who had the disposable income to invest in the media, but they were insufficient in number to actually comprise a mass audience.

Still another debilitating reality in the creation of a mass audience was psychological. This issue had to do with who counted – who possessed sufficient humanity to matter in society. The psychological reality was consonant with and strengthened by the message of theology – because theology, too, doubted that those who could not read "counted" or were in fact "countable" – as, or among, human beings. But psychological reality was also different, since the assumptions of psychology denied basic rationality to common people. Not only were they not countable now, but they might never be; they were uneducable. And it was not merely slaves or women whom the powerful saw as undeserving of education, of voting rights, or of basic freedoms. It was also peasants, serfs, children, and the poor. This was essentially the case throughout the world, where various native populations were included in the "don't count" category – Native Americans in the United States, in Canada, and throughout Central and South America. For example, it was not until the late nineteenth century, in 1897, that the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was founded in Australia – the society that began the process of transforming children from parental property into potential citizens and holders of human rights (Scott & Swain, 2002, p. xi). In the United States Abbott wrote:

> The introduction of children into our early factories was a natural consequence of the colonial attitude toward child labor, of the provisions of the early poor laws and of philanthropic efforts to prevent children from becoming a public charge, and, above all, of the Puritan belief in the virtue of industry and the sin of idleness. Industry by compulsion, if not by faith, was the gospel preached to the young as well as to the old, and quite frequently to the children of the rich as well as the poor. (Abbott, 1908, p. 15)

In England Friedrich Engels wrote in 1845:

> Child labour was a feature of the factory system from the very beginning. This was because in the early days machines were small … In early days the children were recruited from workhouses and large numbers of them were hired out as apprentices to the manufacturers for a term of years. They were housed and clothed communally and were, of course, complete slaves of their masters, by whom they were treated with the greatest indifference and barbarism. (Engels, 1968, p. 168)

Until children were accepted as something more than little adults who could be exploited in mines, factories, mills, and fields while they grew to be larger and more capable workers, it was not necessary to educate them to more than minimal standards; in this way the existence of print media was made irrelevant to many of them. Only in the early twentieth century, when compulsory education laws began to take effect in the US, did most children begin to attain sufficient levels of education to be a potential audience for the media. Although the first compulsory education law in America was adopted in Massachusetts in 1852, it was not until 1918 that all American states had such statutes (Lleras-Muney, 2001, p. 2).

As all these different reasons to differentiate people began to fall apart at the turn of the twentieth century, new fears arose among the cultural elites of the West. These fears, set in motion by the French Revolution and by other revolutions that still reverberated throughout Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, threatened the elites who controlled the world of politics, commerce, and industry; the massive empires that had been constructed by various countries; and culture itself. All these began to fear the "herd."

Concern – or fear – of *hoi polloi*, or of Jacobism, or of Napoleonism later on developed quickly in the ranks of Europe's intelligentsia after the French Revolution, which had essentially abolished feudal relations in Europe and hence had freed the serfs (see Hobsbawm, 1962, pp. 40–41). The emergence of the working class "as an independent and self-conscious force in politics in Britain and France" occurred by 1830 (p. 140). Radical movements developed, so as to represent the common people against "the restricted classes who formed the *pays légal*" (p. 157). By the end of the nineteenth century, in 1895, Gustave Le Bon wrote:

> Scarcely a century ago the traditional policy of European States and the rivalries of sovereigns were the principal factors that shaped events. The opinion of the masses scarcely counted, and most frequently indeed did not count at all. To-day it is the traditions which used to obtain in politics, and the individual tendencies and rivalries of rulers which do not count; while, on the contrary, the voice of the masses has become preponderant … The destinies of nations are elaborated at present in the heart of the masses, and no longer in the councils of princes. The entry of the popular classes into political life – that is to say, in reality, their progressive transformation into governing classes – is one of the most striking characteristics of our epoch of transition. (Le Bon, 1960, pp. 14–15)

To "conservatives and others … concerned about law and order" in the United States, this meant that there was a "danger of mob rule," and this notion "permeated social and political thinking in the decades around the beginning of the twentieth century" (Steele, 1994, p. 56). As Robert H. Wiebe concluded in his analysis, those in power in the United States "in the baldest sense … came to fear in a democratic society the people might rule" (Wiebe, 1967, p. 77). In England John Cowper Powys wrote about the herd; he referred to the British fear of the rabble, of chaos, constantly reminding his readers of who they were, so that any evil tendencies from within might be put down for the sake of preserving British culture – the "final wall," he said, "upon which one leans one's back in a god-forsaken chaos" (Powys, 1929, p. 262). This same theme was also picked up by Walter Lippmann in the United States (Lippmann, 1949, p. 34).

By the turn of the twentieth century the "yellow press" had developed – it was named after a cartoon character called "the yellow kid" – and it centered around sensationalistic accounts of crime, accidents, and corruption; muckraking had begun; and Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst had sold millions of newspapers by whipping up war sentiments after the sinking of USS *Maine* in Havana harbor (that was the battleship that had begun the Spanish–American War). Within a few years war fever began to develop across Europe, and along with it came the development of the communication tactics destined to reach the recently important masses: propaganda. Propaganda during World War I was largely aimed at keeping at a high peak of support the spirits of the populations whose countries were engaged in the war, especially after the carnage on the battlefield began to sink in. Many – including Goebbels, Hitler, and scholars later on – credited the superiority of British propaganda with the eventual defeat of Germany and its allies (see Fortner, 1993, pp. 101–102).

Also in the first decade of the twentieth century, film moved from its humble beginnings as a novelty to becoming a full-fledged medium for storytelling. Movie theaters started to develop, and the cinema (at that time silent) was now engaging people who had been largely ignored by cultural institutions in most countries. Film was something that people could understand, something that could draw them into a story – even something that could rewrite history. *Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915, "relies on racist themes that many white Americans found quite appealing during the upheavals of industrialization and urbanization," as Conrad Pitcher noted. "Many during the early twentieth century shared the distorted view of history that prompted the negro phobia and preoccupation with racial purity found in the film" (Pitcher, 1999, p. 51; see also Franklin, 1979). Disputes arose between political liberals and moral conservatives from about 1907 forward, politicizing the film industry, which found its first major audiences among the working classes and in ethnic neighborhoods (Rosenbloom, 1987).

Immediately after the end of the war radio arrived, so to speak. The Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was created in 1919, at the instigation of the Navy Department (Fortner, 2005, p. 64), and a "radio boom" emerged by 1921 in the US,

when millions of new listeners joined the crowded airwaves to hear information and entertainment from afar. Not only that but, as Robert Park put it in 1925,

> In a great city, where the population is unstable, where parents and children are employed out of the house and often in distant parts of the city, where thousands of people live side by side for years without so much as a bowing acquaintance, these primary relationships of the primary group are weakened and the moral order which rested upon them is gradually dissolved. (Park, 1925, p. 24)

By the time World War Two broke out in 1939, radio was by far the most significant mass medium.

> Never in the history of civilized life had there been a medium of communication which could transmit so much information – whether lofty or trash – to so wide an audience. In millions of radio hours, much that was genuinely cultural reached the most isolated citizen. Good music, an occasional treat for a refined urban elite, became the pleasure and inspiration of many millions in small towns … Nevertheless, advertiser control showered an unconscionable load of trash upon the American public, partly because the medium was so voracious, and partly, of course, because greed dictated entertainment that would appeal to the greatest number while offending absolutely no-one. (Marquis, 1984, pp. 410, 412)

In such an environment – new means of connecting people rapidly developing; fear of propaganda; and an atomistic population, bereft of moral anchor – reliance on traditional strategies to exert political authority or to uphold civilization seemed futile. The sale of patent medicines via the radio was a profitable business. Charlatans could woo people to radical causes. Russia had fallen to the Bolsheviks in 1917. In Europe fascists were on the move by the mid-1920s. The world was apparently unraveling, just as the means to exert control were slipping through the hands of elites and into those of recently arrived immigrants, especially Eastern European Jews (see Dresser, 1996, Jowett, 1976, Sklar, 1975).

> The arrival of large numbers of seemingly unassimilable immigrants, especially Italians and Jews, and the Homestead and Pullman strikes were interrelated developments that sparked a revival of nativism among the Anglo-Saxon elite. Despite the increasingly fragmented nature of a market society, American patricians clung tenaciously to wealth and power and resisted the erosion of their cultural authority by imposing order. As arbiters of culture, the WASP [white Anglo-Saxon Protestant] elite established the canon of legitimate theater, music, and art; validated modes of representation; and dictated audience reception that was passive in nature. (Higashi, 1990, p. 183; see also Higham, 1981)

And then came the 1930s: worldwide depression. Europe was on a war footing. Fascism and communism vied for the hearts and minds of those who would fight or support the fighters – those who became part of war machines. In the US,

radical right and radical left both flooded the streets with pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines. Some, like the radical priest Charles Coughlin, took to the airwaves and started a campaign for the presidency. For instance, in Birmingham, Alabama

> Communist party organizers used [the city] as a staging area for drives among local residents and sharecroppers further south. In 1930 Communists started a newspaper, the *Southern Worker*, in Birmingham, and affiliated groups, such as the International Labor Defense (ILD), also established offices in the city. (Ingalls, 1981, p. 522)

Such activities were made possible by the changes in the way in which the notion of free speech was viewed during the 1930s.

> [A] strong right to free speech in general appealed to members of the New Deal coalition who sought protection from government oppression. These minority groups, which included immigrants, children of immigrants, Catholics, and Jews, had borne the brunt of government oppression in the early twentieth century, not only in the United States but in Europe as well. (Berman, 1994, p. 293)

In addition,

> pro-labor constituents, who made up an important sector of the New Deal coalition and included union members, Socialists, and Communists, saw a strengthened right to free speech as a means to secure the right to picket and protest management practices as well as a political tool to influence the government. (Berman, 1994, p. 293)

In other words, when the cultural and political elites considered their situation during the new century, and especially during the 1930s, they could see the significance of their commitments to order, social control, and agenda setting slipping away. Not only did new media technologies introduce the common people to knowledge and information that had previously been out of reach, and did so in a manner that made it relevant to their concerns – and note that by the 1930s the newsreel was also an important means of sharing news of the world in movie theaters; but radical groups on both the left and the right of the political spectrum were now able to use these media to pursue their own self-defined agendas regardless of the criticisms leveled at them by the "ruling classes." People's status, regardless of education, class, or social and occupational situation, had become acceptable within the larger society; education levels had increased and, along with them, literacy; people had organized and had begun to define their own interests, then to promote them through the media; and the voting franchise had been expanded, so that most people were now eligible to vote. (There were efforts in the Southern US, of course, to deny the vote to African Americans, but in terms of federal legal status this should not have happened, as passage of the 1964 Voting Rights Act eventually declared about setting the stage for the Fifteenth Amendment.)

As these realities became ever more apparent, the need to understand the real impacts of the media on the consciousness and choices of non-elites became crucial to political and social stability. Not only were these non-elites literate voting members of society by then; they also far outnumbered the cultural, economic, political, and social elites, accustomed as those were to calling the shots. Some members of these elites had a *noblesse oblige* mentality, engaging in government service or running charities as a hold-over "duty" of the Victorian Age, while others were simply used to bullying their way to greater wealth or power (e.g., in New York City's Tammany Hall). But the media seemed to have the potential to threaten the existing social order. And academics paid attention, too, to these realities. During the 1930s a group of social psychologists and sociologists combined their efforts to create an Institute for Propaganda Analysis and began publishing analytical bulletins, books, and teachers' guides (Silverstein, 1987, p. 50).

This is where the history of media and mass communication research begins and where it gets exceedingly messy. This, of course, is the typical scenario when cultural conflict occurs. In this case, cultural elites feared the herd mentality, while those who saw the new media primarily as agents of publicity – as David Sarnoff had called the radio – were eager to use them as means to tap into the herd with persuasive messages, either economic or political. Early research studies were significant in their seeming certification that the herd could be moved, and relatively easily. Two major studies – one funded by the Payne Fund, to try to determine the effects of movies on children, and the other undertaken immediately after the famous Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* broadcast in 1938 – were qualified as "milestones" by Shearon Lowery and Melvin L. De Fleur (1983). The Payne Fund studies were conducted between 1929 and 1932. Lowery and De Fleur credit Herbert Blumer – who conducted autobiographical research to determine the influence of the movies on people – with a rich study that indicated "rather clearly that the content of the movies served as substantial influences on children" (Lowery & De Fleur, 1983, p. 40). Another study, which Blumer completed with Phillip Hauser, concluded that "motion pictures played a direct role in shaping the delinquent and criminal careers of substantial segments of those studied" (Lowery & De Fleur, 1983, p. 40). W. W. Charters (1966, p. 382), summarizing another Payne Fund study conducted by Ruth C. Peterson and L. L. Thurstone, concluded that "the outstanding contribution of the study is the establishment of the fact that the attitude of children toward a social value can be measurably changed by one exposure to a picture." He also noted that these attitude studies had "found that the effect of pictures upon attitudes is cumulative. They demonstrated the fact that two pictures are more powerful than one and three are more potent than two" (Charters, 1966, p. 383). While the overall results of the Payne Fund studies were "inconclusive about the effects of movies on American children, the best-selling popularized account of their results, Henry Forman's 1933 *Our Movie-Made Children*, asserted rather unequivocally that movies dull the discrimination and confuse the judgment of American youth" (quoted in Siomopoulos, 1999, p. 45). American intellectuals, including Lewis Mumford, John Dewey, and Walter Lippmann,

all criticized the "amoral" impetus that gave rise to technological progress (Siomopoulos, 1999, p. 47). "Mumford argued that mass culture homogenises its audience not only because it disseminates stereotyped representations, but also because the mass cultural experience is passive and rationalized, much like the modern experience of work" (Siomopoulos, 1999, p. 48). So the two new technologies, radio and film, outside the control of cultural elites, and despite their potential to raise cultural standards, were to be feared.

Hadley Cantril, originally publishing a summary of the work on Orson Welles' radio program in 1938, wrote:

> on the evening of October 30, 1938, thousands of Americans became panic-stricken by a broadcast purported to describe an invasion of Martians which threatened our whole civilization. Probably never before have so many people in all walks of life and in all parts of the country become so suddenly and so intensely disturbed as they did on this night. (Cantril, 1971, p. 579)

Although these studies have been criticized for the methods they used to come to their conclusions, at the time they confirmed the fears of the cultural elites: the new media were a threat to their authority. Such studies provided a kind of scientific certainty to suspicions raised by the specter of millions falling for the fascist or the communist party lines – a phenomenon certified not only by the development of political movements in the US following such ideologies, but by the acceptance of Nazism by highly cultured German citizens. The conservative poet T. S. Eliot reminded his readers in 1939 about "the tendency of unlimited industrialism is to create bodies of men and women – of all classes – detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob" (Eliot, 1982, p. 53). And Harold D. Lasswell and Dorothy Blumenstock, writing in the same year, said it was the "Age of Propaganda" (Lasswell & Blumenstock, 1939, p. 3). It did not matter that most of the propaganda seen by the public was economic in nature and that it actually provided a new conduit for those in control to influence the masses; for the public, having been drawn to this sort of propaganda, would make political propaganda "all the keener" (Lasswell & Blumenstock, 1939, p. 4). Elites might lose their control on power.

There were two realities at play here that must be acknowledged if we are to understand the genesis of mass communication research and the repudiation of the research perspectives that emerged during this period – especially as they were articulated by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld in their *Public Opinion* of 1955. One reality was simply that the ground was shifting under the feet of societies in the 1920s and 1930s. As cultural elites were trying to grasp how their societies could embrace abhorrent ideologies and how they themselves might cope with the feared repercussions of a devastating economic depression that created potential unrest – or even revolution or war – during this period, there had to be some understandable reason. Certainly the sudden embrace of the new media by the masses was a

reasonable suspect; and, as early research seemingly suggested that these media could easily sway the untutored mind, the warning seemed clear.

To give but one example, in the southern cotton-producing states a wave of strikes over working conditions, wages, and hours began in 1929.

> Local newspapers tended to be connected to traditional economic interests, such as textiles, and thus took a vehement and aggressive stance against this early wave of worker protest. Indeed, mill owners and local newspapers often worked hand in hand to sway public opinion away from strikers by appealing to anti-Communist sentiments, despite the fact that few workers had such affiliations. (Roscigno & Danaher, 2001, p. 22)

These strikes continued sporadically into the early 1930s, a large number occurring in 1934. Since the people participating in these strikes were generally poor, uneducated, and dispersed, how did they find out about this "campaign" for better treatment? It was the use of new media, in this case radio. Roscigno and Danaher (2001, p. 26) argue that this new medium altered the leverage and autonomy of the subgroup of textile workers. New radio stations established in the South

> had the unintended consequence of creating a relatively autonomous community of musicians, many of which were ex-mill workers, who traveled from mill town to mill town and radio station to radio station. This group alone, we suggest, represented an important conduit for information flow among mill towns … By disseminating information geographically, media can mold the political perceptions of a dispersed population. This was the case with radio and its establishment in the US South.

Through his fireside chats, President Franklin Roosevelt indicated a national commitment "to the plight of workers and workers' right to collectively organize … despite local elite repression" (Roscigno & Danaher, 2001, p. 26).

The second reality was the very myth of the technologies used by these media. They could capture motion and sound; they could carry both sound and picture through the air (the first experiments with TV occurred already in 1927). For radio, writes Alice Marquis, "the years before 1929 were the Era of Wonderment: sound – any sound – emerging from a box seemed like a miracle" (Marquis, 1984, p. 412). These technologies (the motion picture and the radio waves) might not only conquer time and space but carry within them the seeds of destruction for civilization itself. Their impact must be understood before it was too late. The political and economic elites could see the potential for the "magic" of these technologies to be turned against their interests.

There were four types of research pursued within this cultural conflict: propaganda analysis (Harold Lasswell), public opinion research (Walter Lippmann), psychological research (the Payne fund studies), and marketing research (Paul Lazarsfeld) (Robinson, 2006, pp. 76–77).

There was, in other words, a cultural predilection to believe what eventually became known as the "magic bullet theory" of communication effects. The assumed existence of such a "bullet" did fit into the cultural assumptions of those in power: a bullet in the wrong hands might do irreparable harm. It did not matter that the research that underlay the development of this powerful effects model was often anecdotal, based on a remembered past, or difficult to replicate, because it matched the belief system that was part and parcel of the culture. Traditional culture and religion had been abandoned by large swaths of people who were in desperate circumstances and were looking for a new creed that could explain their situation and show them the way forward. Those who defended the old ways feared that their place in the culture would be usurped. Both groups, for different reasons, wanted to believe that these new technologies were powerful. Those outside the cultural elite wanted power to adhere to their use of the media. Those inside the elite groups wanted to know exactly what they were dealing with, so they could take steps to control the potential chaos. And steps were taken to control the new media, beginning in the early 1920s, with radio conferences. These were followed by the 1927 Radio Act and by the 1934 Communications Act in the United States – steps that were, in their own way, also enacted in many other countries (see Fortner, 2005). On the film side, where cinema was the prime focus of entertainment expenditure (Sedgwick & Pokorny, 2005, p. 79), there were the efforts to control content and to reduce the influence of immorality –both on the screen and in personal lives. This resulted in the creation of cinema production codes in 1930 and 1934, and eventually in the rating system for films that is still in place today. In 1935 film admissions in the US amounted to 2.233 billon. Americans "made 18 visits per caput [*sic*] to motion picture theatres, paying 25 cents per visit" (Sedgwick & Pokorny, 2005, p. 82).

Jefferson Pooley's examination of the repudiation of this early research by Katz and Lazarsfeld in the post-war period says that their

> well-written, fifteen-page synopsis of the "ideas with which mass media research began" ascribes to past scholarship one of "two opposite inclinations": the interwar body of work either decried the mass media as "instruments of evil design" or else heralded those media as a "new dawn for democracy" ([Katz and Lazarsfeld], pp. 15–17). Both approaches – the fearful and the ebullient – described the media message as a "direct and powerful stimulus" ([Katz and Lazarsfeld], p. 16). Swept up by popular alarm or blinded by utopian rhetoric, both groups of scholars based their judgments on intuition or folk wisdom or speculative European theory. None of this will do, write Katz and Lazarsfeld. (Pooley, 2006, p. 131)

The subsequent history of the development of media theory is well known. It moved away from the original "powerful effects," "hypodermic needle" assumptions of its earliest days to a more limited effects model; then to a two-step flow model, with the inclusion of opinion leaders; then to a multistep flow model; and then to an explosion of perspectives – critical and cultural studies, audience studies, media

ecology studies, cultural imperialism, content flow, and interpretation studies, among many others. This research broadened the issues of concern, abandoning the fear that had driven the earlier wave, and settled in as a more scientific study of effects, as people reacted to the messages of the media both as consumers and audiences. What we can learn from these early days, however, is how integral elites or powerful interests are to the types of research that develop to study the media. It is not merely the replacement of one paradigm by another, which seems more powerful or more elegant à la Thomas Kuhn, that drives scholarly understandings forward. It is also the need to respond to the society – to its assumptions, fears, and strivings – that can give birth to a new means of understanding the media within that society: how it is used, by whom, and for what ends. As American society has become ever more politicized (we might say ideologized) from the 1980s on, elite groups have become more conscious of the need to control the message. But the difficulty of actually accomplishing this goal, while hindering its achievement, has led both to efforts to redefine the media debate to the advantage of one ideological party or another, and to research aimed at determining the "bias" implicit in media content. This is merely a continuation of the issues of the 1930s, although it is written in a different hand. In other words, media theorizing has never escaped, and perhaps cannot escape, its history – or its connection with the culture that surrounds it.

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3

Political Economic Theory and Research
Conceptual Foundations and Current Trends

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The Political Economy Tradition

Political economy is the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2009). This formulation has a certain practical value, because it calls attention to how the communication business operates – for example, how communications products move through a chain of producers such as a Hollywood film studio, to wholesalers, retailers, and finally to consumers, whose purchases, downloads, and attention are fed back into new processes of production. A more general and ambitious definition of political economy is the study of control and survival in social life. Control refers specifically to the internal organization of social group members and to the process of adapting to change. Survival means how people produce what is needed for social reproduction and continuity. Control processes are broadly political, in that they constitute the social organization of relationships within a community; survival processes are mainly economic, because they concern production and reproduction.

Political economy has consistently placed in the foreground the goal of understanding social change and *historical* transformation. For classical political economists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries such as Adam Smith (1937), David Ricardo (1819), and John Stuart Mill (1848), this meant comprehending the great capitalist revolution, the vast social upheaval that transformed societies based primarily on agricultural labor into commercial, manufacturing, and eventually industrial societies. For Karl Marx (1976), it meant examining the dynamic forces within capitalism and the relationship between capitalism and other forms of

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political economic organization, in order to understand how social change would ultimately lead from capitalism to socialism.

Orthodox economics, which began to coalesce against political economy in the late nineteenth century, tended to neglect this concern for the dynamics of history and social change. It did so in order to transform political economy into the science of economics, which, like the science of physics, would provide general – if static – explanations. According to this view, economics can explain precisely how buyers and sellers come together to set prices in the marketplace, but not those broad processes of social and economic change that create the conditions for setting prices (Foley, 2006). Contemporary political economists, occupying various heterodox positions distinct from what has become the economic mainstream, continue classical political economy's tradition of taking up social change and transformation; and they are focusing now on such areas as the transition from an industrial to a service or information economy. The study of the mass media and communication technology plays an important role in this research, because the industries encompassed by these fields of study are major forces in the creation of today's economy.

Political economy is also characterized by an interest in examining the social whole or the *totality of social relations* that make up the economic, political, social, and cultural areas of life. From the time of Adam Smith, whose interest in understanding social life was not constrained by the disciplinary boundaries that mark academic life today, through Marx and on to contemporary institutional, conservative, and neo-Marxian theorists, political economy has consistently aimed to build on the unity of the political and the economic by accounting for their mutual influence and for their relationship to wider social and symbolic spheres of activity. The political economist asks: How are power and wealth related (Clark, 1998)? How do these influence our systems of mass media, knowledge production, and entertainment (McChesney, 2007)?

Political economy is also noted for its commitment to *moral philosophy*, defined as an interest both in the values that help to create social behavior and in those moral principles that ought to guide efforts to change it. It is therefore both descriptive and normative. For Adam Smith (1976), as evidenced in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, this meant understanding values like self-interest, materialism, and individual freedom, which were contributing to the rise of commercial capitalism. For Karl Marx, moral philosophy meant the ongoing struggle between the drive to realize individual and social value in human labor and the pressure in capitalism to reduce labor to a marketable commodity. Contemporary political economy tends to favor moral philosophical standpoints that promote the extension of democracy to all aspects of social life. This goes beyond the political realm, which guarantees rights to participate in government, to the economic, social, and cultural domains, where supporters of democracy call for income equality, access to education, and full public participation in cultural production on the basis of the right to communicate freely.

Following from this view, *social praxis*, or the fundamental unity of thought and action, also occupies a central place in political economy. Specifically, against

traditional academic positions, which separate the sphere of research from that of social intervention, political economists, in a tradition tracing its roots to ancient practices of providing advice and counsel to leaders, have consistently viewed intellectual life as a form of social transformation and social intervention as a form of knowledge. Although they differ fundamentally on what should characterize intervention – from Adam Smith, who supported free markets, to Marx, who called on labor to realize itself in revolution – political economists are united in the view that the division between research and action is artificial and must be overturned.

The political economy approach is also distinguished by the many schools of thought that provide a variety of viewpoints and stimulate debate. Arguably the most important academic debate emerged in responses to the classical political economy of Adam Smith and his followers. One set, which eventually established the contemporary discipline of economics, focused on the individual as the primary unit of analysis and the market as the principal structure, both coming together through the individual's decision to register demands in the marketplace. Over time, this approach progressively eliminated classical political economy's concerns for history, the social totality, moral philosophy, and praxis and transformed political economy into the science of economics, founded on the empirical investigation of marketplace behavior conceptualized in the language of mathematics. Broadly understood as *neoclassical economics* – or simply *economics*, in recognition of its dominant position as today's orthodoxy – this is a perspective that reduces people to being just one among other factors of production; and these factors, along with land and capital, are revalued solely for their productivity or ability to enhance the market value of a final product (Jevons, 1965).

A second set of responses to classical political economy opposed this tendency by retaining the concern for history, the social whole, moral philosophy, and praxis, even if that meant giving up the goal of creating the science of economics. This set constitutes the wide variety of approaches labeled *political economy*. A first wave was led by very different groups: *conservatives*, who sought to replace marketplace individualism with the collective authority of tradition (Carlyle, 1984); *utopian socialists*, who accepted the classical faith in social intervention but urged putting community ahead of the market (Owen, 1851); and *Marx*, who put labor and the struggle between social classes back at the center of political economy (Marx, 1976). Subsequent approaches built on these perspectives, leaving us with a wide range of contemporary formulations.

Although economics occupies the center and center-right of the academic political spectrum, a *neoconservative political economy* thrives in the work of George J. Stigler (1971) and his followers, who apply the categories of neoclassical economics to all social behavior with the aim of expanding individual freedom. *Institutional political economy* occupies a slightly left-of-center view, arguing, for example in the work of Galbraith (1985), that institutional and technological constraints shape markets to the advantage of those corporations and governments that are large enough and powerful enough to control them. Institutionalists created the framework for studies that document how large media companies

control the production and distribution of mass media products in order to restrict diversity of content, specifically by keeping out work that challenges pro-business views. *Neo-Marxian* approaches – including those of the French Regulation School (Aglietta, 1979), world systems theory (Wallerstein, 1991), and others engaged in the debate over globalization (Harvey, 2011) – continue to place social class at the center of analysis and are principally responsible for debates on the relationship between monopoly capitalism, the automation and deskilling of work, and the growth of an international division of labor (Braverman, 1974). Finally, social movements have spawned their own schools of political economy, principally *feminist political economy*, which addresses the persistence of patriarchy and the failure to account for household labor (Huws, 2003), *environmental political economy*, which concentrates on the links between social behavior and the wider organic environment (Maxwell & Miller, 2011), and a political economy that melds the analysis of social movements with the *autonomous Marxist* theoretical tradition (Hardt & Negri, 2004).

Research on the Political Economy of the Media

North American research has been extensively influenced by the contributions of two founding figures: Dallas Smythe (1981) and Herbert Schiller (1996). Smythe taught the first course in the political economy of communication at the University of Illinois and is the first in four generations of scholars linked together in this research tradition. Schiller, who followed Smythe at the University of Illinois, similarly influenced several generations of political economists.

Their approach to communication studies drew on both the *institutional* and *Marxian* traditions. A concern about the growing size and power of transnational communication businesses places them squarely in the institutional school, but their interest in social class and in media imperialism gives their work a definite Marxian focus. However, they were less interested than, for example, European scholars in providing an explicit theoretical account of communication. Rather their work – and, through their influence, a great deal of the research carried in this area – has been driven more explicitly by a sense of injustice about the fact that the communication industry has become an integral part of a wider corporate order – one that, they maintain, is both exploitative and undemocratic. Although Smythe and Schiller were concerned with the impact of transnational media companies within their respective national bases, they both developed a research program that charts the growth in power and influence of these companies throughout the world.

Partly owing to their influence, North American research has produced a large literature on industry- and class-specific manifestations of transnational corporate and state power; this literature is distinguished by its concern to participate in ongoing social movements and oppositional struggles to change the dominant media and create alternatives (McChesney, 2000; Mosco, 2009; Schiller, 1999; Wasko, 2003).

A major objective of this work is to advance public interest concerns before government regulatory and policy organs. Such concerns include support for those movements that have taken an active role before international organizations, in defense of a new international economic, information, and communication order (Mosco & Schiller, 2001).

European research is less clearly linked to specific founding figures and, although it is also connected to movements for social change, particularly in defense of public service media systems, the leading work in this region has been more concerned to integrate communication research within various neo-Marxian and institutional theoretical traditions. Of the two principal directions this research has taken, one, most prominent in the work of Garnham (2000) and in that of Murdock and Golding (2000), has emphasized *class power*. Building on the Frankfurt School tradition as well as on the work of Raymond Williams, it documents the integration of communication institutions, mainly business and state policy authorities, in the wider capitalist economy, and also the resistance of subaltern classes and movements that oppose neoconservative state practices promoting the liberalization, commercialization, and privatization of the communication industries.

A second stream of research foregrounds *class struggle* and is most prominent in the work of Armand Mattelart (Mattelart, 2000; Mattelart & Siegelaub, 1983). Mattelart has drawn from a range of traditions such as dependency theory, Western Marxism, and the worldwide experience of national liberation movements to understand communication as one among the principal sources of *resistance* to power. His work has demonstrated how peoples of the Third World – particularly in Latin America where Mattelart was an advisor to the government of Chile before it was overthrown in a 1973 military coup – used the mass media to oppose Western control and to create indigenous news and entertainment media.

Research on the political economy of communication from the less developed world has covered a wide area of interests, although a major stream has grown in response to the modernization or developmentalist theory that originated in Western attempts, particularly from the USA, to incorporate communication into an explanatory perspective on development that would be congenial to mainstream academic and political interests. The developmentalist thesis held that the media are resources that, along with urbanization, education, and other social forces, stimulate economic, social, and cultural modernization. As a result, media growth is an index of development (Rogers, 1971, Schramm, 1964). Drawing on several streams of international neo-Marxian political economy, including world systems and dependency theory, political economists challenged the fundamental premises of the developmentalist model, particularly its technological determinism and the omission of practically any interest in the power relations that shape the relationships between rich and poor nations and the multilayered class relations between and within them (Alzouma, 2005; Bolano, Mastrini, & Serra, 2004; Pendakur, 2003; Zhao, 2008).

The failure of development schemes incorporating media investment sent modernization theorists in search of revised models, which add new media to the

mix (Jussawalla & Taylor, 2003). Political economists have responded principally by addressing the power of these new technologies to help create a global division of labor. A first wave of research saw the division largely in territorial terms: unskilled labor concentrated in the poorest nations, semi-skilled and more complex assembly labor went to semi-peripheral societies, and research, development, and strategic planning were limited to First World corporate headquarters, where most profit would flow. Contemporary research acknowledges that class divisions cut across territorial lines and maintains that what is central to the evolving international division of labor is the growth in flexibility for firms that control the range of technologies that overcome traditional time and space constraints (Wasko & Erickson, 2008; Yu Hong, 2011).

One can also map political economic theory through the three social processes that are central to the field: commodification, spatialization, and structuration. Commodification is the process of taking goods and services that are valued for their use – for example food for satisfying hunger, stories for communication – and transforming them into commodities that are valued for what they can earn in the marketplace – for example farming for selling food, producing drama for commercial television. The process of commodification holds a dual significance for communication research. First, communication practices and technologies contribute to the general commodification process throughout society. For example, the introduction of computer communication gives all companies, and not just communication companies, greater control over the entire process of production, distribution, and exchange, permitting retailers to monitor sales and inventory levels with ever-improving precision. Second, commodification is an entry point to understanding specific communication institutions and practices. For example, the general worldwide expansion of commodification in the 1980s, responding in part to global declines in economic growth, led to the increased commercialization of media programming, the privatization of once public media and telecommunications institutions, and the liberalization of communication markets (Murdock & Wasko, 2007; Schiller, 2007a).

The political economy of communication has been notable for its emphasis on describing and examining the significance of institutions, especially businesses and governments, responsible for the production, distribution, and exchange of communication commodities and for the regulation of the communication marketplace. Although it has not neglected the commodity itself and the process of commodification, the tendency has been to foreground the study of business and government. When it has treated the commodity, political economy has tended to concentrate more on media *content* and less on media audiences and on the labor involved in media production. The emphasis on media structures and content is understandable in light of the importance of global media companies and in view of the growth in the value of media content. Tightly integrated transnational businesses such as Time Warner, Google, News Corp., and Apple create media products with a multiplier effect that generate revenue from selling content, delivering viewers to advertisers, and making use of the least expensive labor

worldwide (Bettig & Hall, 2003). Political economy has paid some attention to *audiences*, particularly to understand the common practice whereby advertisers pay for the size and characteristics of an audience that a newspaper, web site, or television program can deliver. This generated a vigorous debate about whether audiences in fact labor, in other words sell their labor power – in effect their attention – in return for whatever content is produced (Smythe, 1981). Political economy research has advanced the analysis of audience research by examining audience history and the complex relationship of audiences to the producers of commercial culture (Hagen & Wasko, 2000; Meehan, 1999). It has also extended the debate over audience labor to the Internet, where the process of building web sites, modifying software, and participating in online communities both resembles and differs from the labor of audiences that Smythe described (Terranova, 2004).

In addition to media content and audiences, media labor is subject to the commodification process. Braverman's now classic work (1974) directly confronted the transformation of the labor process in capitalism. According to him, general labor is constituted out of the unity between *conception* – the power to envision, imagine, and design work – and *execution* – the power to carry it out. In the process of commodification, capital acts to *separate* conception from execution, skill from the raw ability to carry out a task; to *concentrate* conceptual power in a managerial class that is either a part of capital or represents its interests; and to reconstitute the labor process with this new distribution of skill and power at the point of production. In the extreme, and with considerable labor resistance, this involved the application of detailed and intrusive "scientific management" practices, pioneered by Frederick Winslow Taylor. Braverman documented the process of labor transformation in the rise of manufacturing, but he is particularly recognized for demonstrating the extension of this process into the service and information sectors. His work gave rise to an enormous body of empirical research and theoretical debate, the latter focusing principally on the need to address the contested nature of the process, the active resistance of workers and of the trade union movement, and, finally, how the transformation of the labor process was experienced differently according to industry, occupation, class, gender, and race (Mosco & McKercher, 2008).

The labor of communication workers is also being commodified, as wage labor has grown in significance throughout the media workplace. In order to cut the labor bill and expand revenue, managers replaced mechanical with electronic systems, eliminating thousands of jobs in the printing industry as electronic typesetting did away with the jobs of linotype operators. Today's digital systems allow companies to expand this process by eliminating jobs, employing a greater share of part-time and temporary workers, and relying on audiences, especially for online media, to do more of the media labor. Companies generally retain the rights to the multiplicity of repackaged forms and thereby profit from print, audio, video, and online forms. Broadcast journalists carry cameras and edit tape for delivery over television or computer networks. Companies now sell software well before it has been fully debugged, on the understanding that customers will report errors,

download and install updates, and figure out how to work around problems. This ability to eliminate labor, combine it to perform multiple tasks, and shift labor to unpaid consumers further expands the revenue potential (McKercher & Mosco, 2007). Workers have responded to this by uniting people from different media, including journalists, broadcast professionals, technical specialists in the film, video, telecommunications, and computer services sectors, into trade unions that represent large segments of the communications workforce (Mosco & McKercher, 2008).

The second starting point for the political economy of communication is spatialization, or the process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life. Classical political economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo found it necessary to devote considerable attention to the problems of how to value the spaces taken up by land and the built environment. Furthermore, their development of a labor theory of value was bound up with the problem of how to define and measure labor time. Today political economists maintain that business, aided by developments in communication and information technology, transforms the spaces through which flow those people and goods that make up the global division of labor; and the transformation of this division is evidenced in the massive relocation of millions of jobs to China, India, and other low-wage regions of the world (Mosco, McKercher, & Huws, 2010).

Spatialization builds upon ideas offered by geographers and sociologists to address structural changes brought about by shifting uses of space and time. Giddens (1984) refers to the centrality of *time–space distanciation* in order to examine the decline of our dependency on time and space. He suggests that this process expands the availability of time and space as resources for those who can make use of them. Harvey (1989) identifies *time–space compression* to suggest how the effective map of the world is shrinking, again for those who can take advantage of it. Castells (2001) calls our attention to the declining importance of physical space, the space of places, and the rising significance of *the space of flows* to suggest that the world map is being redrawn according to boundaries established by the movements of people, goods, services, and messages, creating what Massey (2005) refers to as a transformed "power-geometry." Communication is central to spatialization because media and information processes and technologies promote flexibility and control throughout industry, but particularly within the communication and information sectors.

The political economy of communication has traditionally addressed spatialization as the institutional extension of corporate power in the communication industry. This is manifested in the sheer growth in size of media firms, which is measured by assets, revenues, profit, employees, and stock share values. For example, communications systems in the United States are now shaped by a handful of companies such as the US-based firms General Electric (NBC), Viacom (CBS), the Walt Disney Company (ABC), Time Warner (CNN), and new media companies led by Apple, Microsoft, and Google. There are others, including non-US-based firms such as the News Corporation (Fox), Bertelsmann, and Sony. Political economy

has specifically examined growth by taking up different forms of corporate concentration (Baltruschat, 2008; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Kunz, 2006). *Horizontal concentration* takes place when a firm in one line of media buys a major interest in another media operation, which is not directly related to the original business. The typical form of this process is *cross-media* concentration, which is the purchase, by a firm in an older line of media (say, a newspaper), of a firm in a newer line (say, a television station or an online service). But horizontal concentration also takes place when a media company buys all or a part of a business entirely outside of the media (for example, when a broadcaster buys a hotel chain). *Vertical integration* describes the amalgamation of firms within a line of business that extend a company's control over the process of production, as when a major Hollywood film production studio purchases a distributor of film. This form is also referred to as forward integration, because it expands a firm further along the production and distribution processes. Conversely, backward vertical integration took place for example when the New York Times corporation purchased paper mills in Quebec, thereby expanding the company down the production process. In addition to demonstrating how media firms have developed into transnational conglomerates that now rival, in size and power, firms in any industry, political economists are addressing the development of flexible forms of corporate power evidenced in the *joint ventures*, *strategic alliances*, and other short-term and project-specific arrangements that bring together companies or parts of companies, including competitors. These take advantage of more flexible means of communication to come together for mutual interest (Wasko, 2003).

The third entry point for the political economic theory is structuration – a contemporary rendering of Marx's view that people make history, but not under conditions of their own making. Specifically, research based on structuration helps to balance a tendency in political economic analysis to concentrate on structures, typically on business and governmental institutions, by incorporating the ideas of agency, social process, and social practice so as to understand social class, race, gender, and other significant social divisions (Giddens, 1984). Concretely, this means broadening the conception of social class from its structural or *categorial* sense, which defines it in terms of what some have and others have not, to a sense that incorporates both relational and constitutional aspects of the concept.

A *relational* view of social class foregrounds the connections, for example, between business and labor and the ways in which labor constitutes itself within the relationship and as an independent force in its own right. This takes nothing away from the value of seeing class, in part, as a designation for the differences between the "haves" and the "have nots." The political economy of communication has addressed class in these terms by producing research that documents persistent inequities in communication systems, particularly in access to the means of communication (the "digital divide"), and the reproduction of these inequities in social institutions (Hindman, 2008). This has been applied to labor, particularly in research on how communication and information technology has been used to automate and deskill work, including labor in the media industries (Rodino-Colocino, 2006).

It has also served to show how the means of communication are used to measure and monitor work activity in precise detail, in systems of surveillance that extend managerial control over the entire labor process.

A relational view of social class maintains, for example, that the working class is not defined simply by lack of access to the means of communication, but by its relationships of harmony, dependency, and conflict to the capitalist class. Moreover, a *constitutional* conception of class views the working class as producer of its own identity, however tenuous, volatile, and conflicted, in relation to capital and independently of it. This research aims to reveal how classes constitute themselves and how they make history in the face of conditions that constrain this history-making activity (Eubanks, 2011).

When political economy has given attention to agency, process, and social practice, it tends to focus on social class. There are good reasons for this emphasis. Class structuration is a central entry point for comprehending social life, and numerous studies have documented the persistence of class divisions in the political economy of communication. Nevertheless, there are other dimensions to structuration that complement and conflict with class structuration; such are *gender*, *race*, and those broadly defined *social movements*, which, along with class, make up much of the social relations of communication. Political economy has made important strides in addressing the intersection of feminist studies and the political economy of the media (Meehan & Riordan, 2002). It has also made major inroads into research on information technology, gender, and the international division of labor. Such research addresses the double oppression that women workers face in industries like microelectronics, where they receive the lowest wages and experience the most brutalizing working conditions (Pellow & Park, 2002). The field of communication studies has addressed *imperialism* extensively, principally by examining the role of the media and information technology in the maintenance of control by richer over poorer societies. Race figures significantly in this analysis – and more generally in the social process of structuration, as Gandy (1998) takes it up in his multiperspectival assessment of race and the media. Racial divisions are a principal constituent in the multiple hierarchies of the contemporary global political economy; and race, both as category and as social relationship, helps to explain access to national and global resources, including communication, media, and information technology (Green, 2001; Pellow & Park, 2002).

One of the major activities in structuration is the process of constructing *hegemony*, defined as the result of a process of contested ideas that settle into the taken-for-granted, common sense, naturalized way of thinking about the world; this process embraces everything, from cosmology through ethics to everyday social practices. Hegemony is a lived network of mutually constituting meanings and values, which appear to be mutually confirming (Gramsci, 1971). Out of the tensions and clashes within various structuration processes, the media come to be organized in full mainstream, oppositional, and alternative forms (Williams, 1983).

Understanding the political economy of communication also requires one to look outward, at the relationship between this theoretical formulation and those

on its borders. Although one can map the universe of academic disciplines in numerous ways, it is useful to situate the political economy of communication in the middle, with cultural studies and policy science to its sides.

The cultural studies approach is a broad-based intellectual movement that focuses on the constitution of meaning in texts; and "meaning" here is defined broadly, so as to include all forms of social communication. The approach extends over numerous currents and contains numerous fissures, all of which create considerable ferment coming from within (Grossberg, 2010). Nevertheless, it can contribute to the understanding of political economy in several ways. Cultural studies has been open to a broad-based critique of positivism – the view that sensory observation is the only source of knowledge. Moreover, it has defended a more open philosophical approach, which concentrates on subjectivity or on how people interpret their world, as well as on the social creation of knowledge. Cultural studies has also broadened the meaning of cultural analysis by starting from the premise that culture is ordinary and is produced by all social actors rather than by a privileged elite, and that the social is organized around gender and nationality divisions and identities as much as it is organized around social class.

Although political economy can learn from these departures, it can equally contribute to a richer field of cultural studies. Even as it embarks on a philosophical approach that is open to subjectivity and is more broadly inclusive, political economy insists on a realist epistemology that maintains the value of historical research, of thinking in terms of concrete social totalities, and has a well-grounded moral philosophy and a commitment to overcome the distinction between social research and social practice. Political economy departs from the tendency of cultural studies to exaggerate the importance of subjectivity, as well as from the inclination to reject thinking in terms of historical practices and social wholes. Political economy also departs from the tendency of cultural studies to use language that belies the approach's original vision that cultural analysis should be accessible to those ordinary people who are responsible for creating culture. Finally, it calls on cultural studies to pay more attention to labor, the labor process, and the importance of labor in contemporary movements for social change (Smith, 2011).

Political economy can also learn from the development of a policy studies perspective whose political wing has tended to place the state at the center of analysis and whose economic wing aims to extend the application of neoclassical economic theory to a wide range of political, social, and cultural life forms. Political economy has tended to regard government as overly dependent on capital, and therefore it benefits from an approach that takes seriously the active role of the state. Moreover, political economy shares with policy studies an interest in extending analysis over the whole society's policy, economy, and ideation, keeping an eye on social transformation (Stigler, 2003). Nevertheless, political economy departs fundamentally from the policy studies' tendency to a pluralist political analysis that views the state as the independent arbiter of a wide balance of social forces, none of which has enough power to dominate society. Against this picture, political economy insists on the power of business and on the process of commodification

as the starting point of social analysis. Furthermore, political economy rejects the policy studies' tendency to build its analysis of everything in society on individualism and market rationality. Rather it insists on *social* processes, starting from those related to social class, and on setting community and public life against both the market and a narrow form of rationality that, from a political economy perspective, actually reproduces class power.

Current Trends

This section addresses five major trends in the political economy of communication: the globalization of the field; the expansion of an enduring emphasis on historical research; the growth of research from alternative standpoints, especially feminism and labor; the shift from an emphasis on old media to one on new media; and the growth of activism connected to the political economy tradition. None of these is a brand new tendency; they rather build on existing ones, which were often submerged beneath dominant trends in the field (Wasko, Murdock, & Sousa, 2011).

The process of globalizing political economy research is proceeding rapidly. Some of this is the result of the sheer movement of scholars – a development that has sped up over the last two decades. In addition to formal and informal movements of scholars across regions, universities with a strong political economy orientation have established an institutional base that concentrates on international research. At a more formal level, scholarly associations have been active in their support of global research; an example is the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), whose political economy section has extended its early strength in political research into the arena of global research. The general growth of academic journals has assisted the process of globalization, but specific journals like *The Global Media Journal* and *Democratic Communiqué* have been especially helpful to political economy.

This process of global expansion has made a difference to the work of political economists. Most significantly, current research addresses the profound integration of the global political economy and its media systems. In the view of Chakravartty and Zhao (2008), this involves the creation of a "transcultural political economy," which they document in a book containing contributions primarily from non-Western scholars. Where once corporations, including those in the communication industry, were based in one country and moved through the world as an external force, today they are increasingly integrated into the fabric of societies, to the point where it is often difficult to determine their national origin. Operating as owners, partners, and in strategic alliances with companies based in the host country, they have led political economists to shift from talking about the power of multinational corporations to addressing the rise of a worldwide transnational economy.

The global integration of corporate, government, and social class structures is a work in progress. It is fraught with risks, tensions, and contradictions. There is also considerable opposition, evidenced in the rise of social movements that have protested this development at meetings of international agencies like the World Trade Organization and of other international bodies – for instance the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which aims to extend opposition into the communication industry. Political economists have not only examined these developments; they have also taken praxis seriously and participated at the political and policy levels. In doing so, they acknowledge the importance of the trend to transnationalize the political economy of communication. They also recognize the need to create transnational democracy and a genuine cosmopolitan citizenship.

Recent years have brought about significant growth in the amount of historical research and important departures from earlier work. Specifically, current political economy research demonstrates that the media systems in place today are the result of a deeply contested history, involving not just dueling capitalists and their allies in government, but labor unions, citizens groups, consumer cooperatives, religious enthusiasts, and social justice organizations of all stripes across the communication and cultural arenas (Denning, 1996; Fones-Wolf, 2006; Green, 2001; McChesney, 1993; Pellow & Park, 2002; Schiller, 2007b; Tracy, 2006). This is not just an American tale, as research on media history by critical Canadian scholars (Mazepa, 2007; McKercher, 2002) demonstrates.

Historical research into the political economy of communication has begun to emphasize resistance – and not just the admittedly important story of how the powerful dominate. Current research recognizes the importance of this work but argues for a departure. One of the models for this type of thinking is *feminist standpoint theory*, which maintains that social science needs to be practiced and that society needs to be understood from the standpoint of women's experience – rather than men's, as has been the case for so much of what has passed for general social science (Hartsock, 1999). Feminist standpoint thinking has influenced research in the political economy of communication. One of the first major attempts to deliver social science from women's perspective is contained in a collection by Eileen Meehan and Ellen Riordan (2002). Meehan (1999) has made extensive contributions to political economy, most notably by expanding on the work of Dallas Smythe on the question of how the audience is made into a marketable commodity. In 2002 Meehan and Riordan produced *Sex and Money*, which gathered contributions from leading feminists and political economists in an attempt to address the relationships between these perspectives. In their 2007 book *Feminist Interventions in International Communication*, Sarikakis and Shade take a further step to advance a feminist standpoint.

Political economists have also made new departures in political economy research from *a labor standpoint*. Communication studies in general has done a more thorough job of addressing media content and audiences than of addressing communication labor, but recent work suggests that a genuine labor standpoint

has begun to emerge. My work with Catherine McKercher and with Ursula Huws demonstrates different dimensions of this expansion (McKercher & Mosco, 2006, 2007; Mosco & McKercher, 2008; Mosco et al., 2010). For us, while it is important to understand how corporate power, new technology, and conservative governments are changing labor, it is equally important to determine what labor is doing about this. We identify two important developments. The first is the creation of a labor convergence, which brings together trade unions from separate areas of the communication industries into large unions representing journalists, broadcasters, technicians, telephone workers, and people employed in the high-tech world. A second labor strategy is the formation of worker associations, which emerge out of social movements that aim to address a significant problem.

Many who make the shift from the study of old media to that of new media emphasize the continuities between old and new media capitalism. For them, new media deepen and extend tendencies within earlier forms of capitalism by opening new possibilities to turn media and audiences into saleable commodities. As a result, media concentration, commercialism, rich-nation dominance over the global economy, divisions between the information-rich and the information-poor, and militarism persist and grow (McChesney, 2007; Murdock & Golding, 2000, 2004; Schiller, 2007a; Sparks, 2007; Wasko, 2003). It may now be, as Dan Schiller's puts it, "digital capitalism," but it is still capitalism and there is no doubt about which term is more important in this phrase.

For other political economists, the emphasis is on discontinuity and departure from these tendencies in capitalism. Hardt and Negri (2004), Lazzarato (1997), and Dyer-Witheford (1999) remain political economists because they are concerned about the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and exchange of resources. However, as a result of the growth of new media, they view those power relations differently from those who focus on continuity in capitalist relations. Their autonomist perspective – so named because it starts from the autonomy of the working class – maintains that capitalism is propelled by the energy and activity of those who work within it.

In addition to approaches emphasizing continuity and disjunction, the political economy of communication has responded to new media in a third way, by taking a skeptical view of the enthusiasm that inevitably accompanies it. This has been particularly important in historical work, which demonstrates that much of what is considered new and revolutionary in new media was actually associated with every communication technology when the old media were new (Flichy, 2007; Martin, 1991; Winseck & Pike, 2007). This work is also important because it reflects a stepped-up interest, among political economists, to demonstrate the continuity between old and new media by engaging with culture (Fisher, 2010; Mosco, 2004).

The political economy of new media has also begun to address specific problem areas that are particularly significant in this cycle of development in communication and information technology: copyright/intellectual property issues (Bettig, 1996; see also Bettig & Hall, 2003; Schiller, 2007a; Zhao, 2008), electronic surveillance (Kiss & Mosco, 2005; Lyon, 2003), and the tendency toward what some call a

network economy (Mansell, 2004; Melody, 2007). The last two address the challenge of new media for our understanding of economics.

Praxis, or the unity of research and action, is a fundamental characteristic of a political economy approach. Most political economists of communication have been activists as well as scholars, being involved in media democracy, development communication, independent media and universal access work, as well as in labor, feminist, and anti-racist movements (Hackett & Carroll, 2006). The ongoing work of the Union for Democratic Communication, of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, especially its political economy section, and of the World Summit on the Information Society demonstrate this.

Important as these developments are, one of the most significant advances in political activity has been the creation in 2002 of the Free Press by the political economist Robert W. McChesney (2007). This organization has been a focal point for the remarkably resurgent media reform movement in the United States, which has brought together a diverse collection of public interest groups such as the Consumers' Union, the Center for Digital Democracy, the Media Access Project, and the Consumer Federation of America. These have joined with independent media organizations such as Democracy Now! – a daily national independent news program hosted by journalists Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez. Free Press has attracted enormous attention and the support of well-known people like Bill Moyers, Jane Fonda, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. It has sponsored an annual conference on media reform that has attracted literally thousands of people, including scholars, media activists, politicians, and trade unionists. In the past such meetings might bring together at most hundreds of people. Clearly we are observing a populist upheaval around the issue of media reform.

The upswell in the media reform movement can be attributed to the widespread view that the elimination of rules restricting media ownership, providing for some measure of content diversity, and limiting the prices that major cable, satellite, and other media firms can charge consumers has threatened what remains of media democracy, media quality, and universal access to essential services. For many, the loss of 20 percent of all media jobs in the United States over the past five years demonstrates that media concentration is an enormous labor-saving project, which is eroding the quality of journalism and what remains of its independence. To counter these tendencies, Free Press mobilizes activists, lobbies politicians, and makes use of the media (including Bill Moyers' own public television show) to press for alternatives. Such alternatives are ending the concentration of old and new media in the hands of a few giant transnational firms, supporting content diversity and vigorous debate, and creating social policies that guarantee universal access to essential telecommunications and Internet services (Hindman, 2008).

Of particular importance is the fight to preserve "network neutrality." As pressure mounts on large media firms to increase profits, companies are tempted to restructure their networks to increase revenue. Specifically, they are creating a system of faster and slower "lanes" on the information highway, reserving the faster lanes for higher paying content providers, such as certain advertisers, or for those

linked to the network service provider, such as its own subsidiaries. Traffic moves more slowly for those who pay less and for competitors. One important consequence is that the web sites of companies outside the mainstream – including alternative media sites, which do not have the funding to pay the premium for a fast lane – would only be available in lesser quality. Responding to this threat, the media reform movement has fought for legislation and regulations that would preserve what has been (with a few exceptions) the standard practice of treating all content equally – what amounts to one highway at one speed, delivering one standard of quality. Whatever the outcome of these specific struggles, it is evident that political economists have made a significant contribution to the overall resurgence of activism around major communication issues.

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4

Semiotics and the Media

Bronwen Martin

Semiotics is a linguistic theory describing how meaning is generated. As the leading French semiotician Jacques Fontanille has argued, the ultimate goal of the semiotic enterprise is ideological: the discipline seeks to bring into question the fundamental value systems underlying our societies and to open a pathway toward a new humanism.

Influenced by contemporary philosophy and cognitive science, semiotics challenges essentialist views of language; it posits that meaning, far from being inherent in objects, is a human construct relative to an observer. The semiotic approach stresses the transformative and manipulative power of the text – be it verbal or visual – and it is therefore of particular relevance to the field of media studies. Indeed, given the enormous power of the media, the uncovering of hidden meanings can play a crucial role in the furtherance of democracy and in the quest for a more just and ethically aware society.

This chapter will trace the growth and contemporary significance of semiotics, placing a primary (although not exclusive) focus on France and England. The principal areas covered are those of news and science reporting, advertising, political speech, and television documentary. As semiotics is both a theory and a practice, my study will include an analytical grid that, in its broad outlines, can be applied to all kinds of texts.

Ferdinand de Saussure

Semiotics, then, has its origin in the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), who was the first to apply scientific rigor to the study of language. Saussure analyzes the linguistic sign as made up of two components: the signifier and

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the signified. The signifier is a physical object, for example a printed word, a sound, or an image. The signified, on the other hand, is a mental concept: the word "tree" for example, is the signifier, whereas the idea of a tree is the signified. A second key structure introduced by Saussure is that created by the pair *langue* (the language system) and *parole* (the individual linguistic act). In other words, a verbal utterance or a piece of writing relies for its meaning on an underlying abstract system of language or set of rules.

A further key concept central to the entire semiotic enterprise is Saussure's conviction that meaning is a product of differences and that there can be no meaning without structure. Words, for example, do not signify in isolation, but only in relationship to – in opposition to – other words: there can be no "up" without "down," no "good" without "evil," no "freedom" without "confinement," no "winner" without a "loser." As I shall show later, the semiotic method presents itself as an uncovering of vast networks of relationships, implicit and explicit, within a specific discourse. In this respect, it differs from earlier linguistic approaches, which focus on smaller units (such as the sentence) and separate form from content.

Roland Barthes

Many of the basic findings of Saussure were taken up and further developed by the French critic and semiologist Roland Barthes (1915–1980) in the 1950s and 1960s. In his early writings, Barthes mounts a strong attack on the concept of the transparency of language – the belief that words (and visual texts) are an innocent representation of reality, being universally applicable (that is, applicable to all times and places). He points out that language itself, through its codes and conventions, shapes reality and constructs values and ideologies.

It is during this early period that Barthes, influenced by both Saussure and the Dane Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), develops his theory of the sign, highlighting the process whereby cultural meanings are embedded within language. He explores the phenomenon of connotation or, as he puts it, second-order meaning, whereby a signified can become the signifier for another level of meaning. The linguistic sign "Jaguar" denotes a make of car, but it can also connote wealth and luxury. Barthes draws attention to the role of cultural context in the construction of meaning – an approach that will later emerge as a central premise of semiotics.

A detailed practical application of these concepts is presented in Barthes' seminal text *Mythologies* (Barthes, 1973), a book that has had a huge impact in France and in the English-speaking world and remains essential reading for all media students. Barthes examines cultural texts such as margarine and soap powder advertising, the women's magazine *Elle*, and a Charlie Chaplin film and he draws attention to the process of mythologizing, that is, the manner in which a dominant world view or ideology is made to appear a natural state of affairs. He also investigates the use of pastiche or intertextuality in the media. A case in

point would be the Marlboro cigarette advert, where the lone figure echoes the cowboy image of early Hollywood films.

Interestingly, the author's analysis, in *Mythologies*, of a particular photograph (imagined) on the cover of the magazine *Paris Match* has since emerged as a landmark in media analysis. The photograph depicts a black soldier saluting an invisible French flag, the historical context being the Algerian War of Independence (1955–1962). At one level, this photograph can be seen as simply denoting the activity of saluting the flag and presenting it as a natural event. A more careful analysis of the different signifiers – shapes, colors, and gestures – would reveal that the photo is carefully constructed to convey the ideological viewpoint of the French government and to counteract any opposition to the Algerian War that may emerge, say, from an accusation of racism or political oppression. Barthes states:

> I see very well what it [the picture] signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors. (Barthes, 1957, p. 116)

Indeed the final chapter of the book – "Myth Today," in which this analysis appears – is particularly illuminating regarding the role of the dominant ideology and the relationship between language and power – a central theme of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, a contemporary of Barthes. As I shall show, one of the primary functions of semiotic analysis will be to draw attention to this mystification process particularly in the case of texts that claim for themselves the status of scientific objectivity, such as news reporting or photography.

Judith Williamson

Barthes' theories of the sign have been influential in Britain and his concepts of denotation and connotation remain relevant tools for students of the media, especially in the field of advertising and visual analysis. The more specifically ideological and philosophical aspects of Barthes' theories were developed in the seventies by Judith Williamson in a groundbreaking text, *Decoding Advertisements* (Williamson, 1978), which has played a key role in furthering the discipline of semiotics in Britain. Drawing upon the thought of Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser, Williamson addresses issues such as the construction of identity and the role of the unconscious, themes that were also explored by Laura Mulvey (1975) during the same period. Drawing inspiration from the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2008), she also discusses how adverts construct images of nature and culture and how resorting to scientific language can contribute to the process of mystification.

Throughout the book, Williamson highlights the economic function of advertising and the central role of the media in the promotion of a consumer,

capitalist society and in the concealment of real social inequalities. Intertextual parallels can be established both with the hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) and with the writings of the French thinker Henri Lefebvre (1971), who also sees advertising as distracting people from their own political oppression. At the same time, the influence of the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) can be detected: like Williamson, Baudrillard argues that consumerism is the product of artificially created needs. Indeed, for Baudrillard, the media themselves construct a completely artificial or virtual world – he terms it a "simulacrum" – in which signifiers have no anchorage in external reality.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress

Indeed it was this growing interest in continental thought that contributed to the emergence of social semiotics in England in the 1980s. In a key text titled *Social Semiotics*, the semioticians Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress (1988) analyze, among other phenomena, TV adverts and comics, stressing how the meaning of signs and messages must always be situated within the context of social relations and processes. Issues explored include the representation of gender, class, and the family. Social semiotics itself cannot be entirely separated from critical discourse analysis, a discipline inaugurated earlier by Hodge and Kresss (1979). For instance, the concept of modality (the use of either categorical or tentative utterances) is employed in their analysis of the comics *Doctor Who* and the *Beano*.

Algirdas Julien Greimas

In parallel with the development of semiotics in Britain – a process largely influenced by Barthes – was the growth of a second branch, known as Greimassian semiotics. It is this branch that inaugurated the discipline of semiotics in Europe, the term "semiology" (the science of signs) being reserved at that point for the work of the American philosopher and scientist Charles H. Peirce and for Barthes.

French semiotics has its roots in the thought of the Lithuanian linguist Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917–1992) who, together with a group of international researchers, created in the mid-sixties what became known as the Paris School of Semiotics. His theories are outlined in the seminal text *Structural Semantics* (Greimas, 1983) and presented later in a dictionary (Greimas & Courtés, 1982). His thought was influenced not only by Saussure and Hjelmslev but also – and significantly – by the Russian formalist and folklorist Vladimir Propp (1895–1970) and by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss.

The originality of Greimas' approach lies primarily in his concept of levels of meaning. These are termed (a) the surface level of manifestation or the discursive level; (b) the narrative level; and (c) the deep abstract level. It is the deep level that

generates the narrative and the discursive level, in a movement from simple structures to ever-increasing degrees of complexity of meaning.

It is important to note that the second and third levels are implicit and relate to patterns of meaning that precede language. Semiotic analysis therefore seeks to bring to light processes that are largely unconscious. It is only, for example, through an understanding of the fundamental deep-level values that generate a media item that the viewer/reader can take an informed position and adopt a critical stance (when pertinent). During the 1970s and 1980s Greimas' thought was disseminated in Britain by publishing houses such as Blackwell and Routledge and had a real impact on cultural studies. However, although they made a significant contribution to the growth of narratology, highlighting the importance of Propp (whose 31 narrative functions proved particularly popular in media analysis), in England Greimas' works were never really accorded the same status or degree of attention as in Europe.

How Do I Analyze a Media Text?

I now propose to present the broad outlines of an analytical grid – largely inspired by Greimas – that can be applied to all discourses. The approach described here draws particular attention to strategies of manipulation and mystification and includes theories of enunciation developed by the Paris School in the seventies and eighties. A number of rhetorical and linguistic devices explored in the nineties from a semiotic perspective have also been taken on board. This approach, although by no means mainstream, has proved particularly productive in the teaching of media analysis in institutions of higher education in Britain during the nineties and the first decade of the new millennium.

Before commencing the analysis, the chosen item should be briefly situated within its immediate context, and also in relation to a targeted audience. In other words, where and how does the item appear? For example, does a particular advert feature in a newspaper, in a professional magazine, or in a TV commercial? We then proceed to an examination of the surface level of meaning.

The discursive level

Analysis opens with exploration of the specific words or pictures that make up the text. There are two central components at this level: the figurative component and the enunciative component.

The figurative component

In semiotics the term "figure" relates to all those elements in a text that refer to the external, physical world and can be apprehended through the five senses. The figurative component is therefore an essential ingredient in the construction of a "reality effect," that is, in creating the impression of a real world of people, places,

and things with which the reader/viewer can identify. It plays a key role in the media, for example in the presentation of a news item, where it is crucial that an appearance of truth be created in order to ensure the authority of the text and its credibility in the eyes of the receiver.

Furthermore, in order for a media item to be internally coherent or to make sense, it must bring into play patterns both of repetition and of difference. We begin therefore by grouping together those words that have a meaning in common or a common denominator. These groupings are known as figurative isotopies and they ensure textual continuity: for instance the words *pen*, *book*, and *phone* belong to the isotopy of objects and *man*, *girl*, and *policeman* to the isotopy of actors.

The uncovering of the key figurative isotopies identifies the parameters of the text, that is, the field of experience that has been selected and considered worthy of attention. Hence an implicit evaluation has already been carried out by the sender or text producer. Moreover, the omission of a particular isotopy can itself carry an ideological significance. For example, in a semiotic study of media representations of poverty and famine in the Third World, Jonathan Benthall (1993) draws attention to the fact that the key role played by colonialism and global capitalism is largely ignored.

Having pinpointed the major groupings, we now look for oppositions or differences. Within the isotopy of place, for example, the contrasting poles (categories) high/low, city/country may be detected, and in that of people, male/female, or soldier/civilian. It might then be possible to look for correlations between isotopies. Males, for instance, could be associated with public spaces and females with private spaces. Similar patterns may emerge in a visual item in terms of line, color, shape, size, or angle of shot. In a seminal text titled *Semiotics, Marketing and Communication*, which has been extremely influential in the field of visual analysis, the semiotician Jean-Marie Floch (1947–2001) presents 12 visual categories (clear/dark, continuous lines/discontinuous lines, and so on) that he brings to bear in his study of adverts (Floch, 2001, p. 79).

The final stage of the analysis involves an exploration of evaluative terms. Here we explore what is known in semiotics as the thymic category, that of euphoria versus dysphoria. In his *Understanding News*, John Hartley draws attention to the manner in which the media resort to neat categorizations and thrive on the "us/them" opposition (1982, pp. 115–117). The result is a stereotyping and demonizing of whole groups of the population through the use of phrases such as "the problem of uncontrolled immigration," "Islamic terrorism," "extremist elements," "groups of surly hoodies." What was initially a subjective view becomes a cultural assumption, a commonsensical truth.

The negative evaluation could also be strengthened in the use of photography: Muslims and members of the working class who are accused of a crime are often presented in close-up and made to appear as gangsters, as illustrated in a recent picture of the cleric Abu Qatada in the *Evening Standard* (January 17, 2012). When the photograph of the same person is taken from a different angle – as in the *Guardian* – the effect is quite different. Sound can also set in motion whole chains

of connotations, reinforcing social prejudices. The unemployed interviewed on radio or television frequently either have strong local accents or come from particular ethnic communities. Their use of language is also less polished than that of the more educated middle classes. The impression given is that unemployment is the product of individual ignorance and is confined to a particular sector of the population rather than engrained within the capitalist economic system.

Sometimes the evaluation is less overt, more subtle. As John Richardson has reminded us, the *Guardian Weekly* published a list of words used by journalists during the 1991 war against Iraq (Richardson, 2007, pp. 47–48). Those in the left column refer to the Iraqis and those in the right column refer to the English:

They have	**We have**
A war machine	Army, navy, and air force
Censorship	Reporting restrictions
Propaganda	Press briefings
They	**We**
Destroy	Suppress
Kill	Eliminate
Kill	Neutralize
They launch	**We launch**
Sneak attacks	First strikes
Without provocation	Pre-emptively
Their men are	**Our men are**
Troops	Boys
Hordes	Lads

John Sorenson (1991, pp. 47–48) has also described how, in the media coverage of famine, Africans are frequently presented negatively, as incompetent backward peasants, in contrast to their generous white Western "civilized" benefactors.

It is apparent, then, that a close analysis of the language of the media can alert us to questions of ethical responsibility. Indeed, the role played by the English tabloid press and by some TV broadcasts in inflaming hatred toward the Muslims is now widely recognized, and this hatred frequently manifests itself in acts of verbal abuse and physical violence. Similarly, as a survey in the *Guardian* of February 6, 2012 has shown (Walker, 2012), the denigration of the disabled in sections of the media and the accusation that they are lazy and work-shy (originally implicit in government statements) have led to frequent incidents of harassment and even physical violence. Indeed, the demonizing of whole population groups and entire countries by the media can serve to legitimize or render acceptable in the eyes of the public the withdrawal of basic human rights, warfare, and the death of civilians.

The enunciative component

In the 1970s and 1980s semiotic research focused increasingly on the pragmatic function of texts and on further strategies of persuasion that manifest themselves at the discursive level. Here the earlier findings of the French structuralist critic Gérard Genette (born 1930) were given a semiotic formulation. Issues of narrative stance, of focalization and position of the observer in the text were explored.

Indeed, the choice of the enunciative position made by a text producer can considerably enhance the process of mystification previously discussed. A news article or broadcast is always presented in the third person ("he"/"she"/"they"), where the position of the narrator/observer remains hidden. This device serves to disguise the origin of the information, which, as Noam Chomsky (2002) has argued, can frequently be a government source. The impersonal stance, coupled with omniscience, strengthens the "truth effect" by creating the impression of absolute objectivity and factivity. It is a stance that is basically authoritarian and establishes a distance – that of the expert – between the text sender or producer and the receiver. In TV news, this distancing effect can be conveyed visually through position of desk, formality of clothing, and rituals of communication such as particular gestures and eye movements.

A TV news programme may, of course, involve more than one narrator. Having established the initial stance of authority, the camera may switch to an individual who may be either a reporter at the scene or a participant in an event, thus lending further weight to earlier statements. This impression of reproducing a natural state of affairs – what really happened – is frequently the result of carefully chosen techniques of construction including in many cases the earlier rehearsal of witnesses' statements – a factor that can also be true of documentary programs. In the case of a written article, the truth effect may be heightened through references to figures of authority – for example, "according to the head of the British army." Direct quotations may also be used to support the argument.

The persuasive function of the enunciative strategies can be further enhanced through the choice of categorical modality, that is, through the use of categorical statements, which express certainty, rather than tentative utterances. Transformation of modality is very common in the media. Hodge and Kress (1988, p. 123) give the example of a tentative statement made by the British Labour Party leader Michael Foot in the early eighties during an anti-left press campaign directed at Ken Livingstone. His words are subsequently transformed into the categorical newspaper headline "Foot Blasts Red Ken over Poll Trouncings."

It is important to note that these techniques of mystification are not only limited to news stories. They are also especially pronounced in the media coverage of scientific research, where they can serve to reinforce prejudice. For instance, in recent years both the tabloid and the quality press have displayed a marked interest in recording research findings that would appear to highlight the innate intellectual and emotional differences between men and women. An article in the *Guardian* of July 14, 1997 with the headline "Genes Say Boys Will Be Boys and Girls Will Be Sensitive" reported that, according to recent research, women are genetically more empathetic

and caring than men and that men "could not help being boorish and aggressive." The use of categorical statements and the recourse to stark oppositions throughout the text produce what could be regarded as a serious misrepresentation of science. The authoritarian stance is strengthened not only through quotations from a professor at a research institute, but also through the use of logical and causal connectors such as "therefore," "but," "so that," "because," which give the impression of a highly rational discourse that cannot be repudiated. In fairness to the *Guardian*, a newspaper renowned for its investigative journalism, the article was juxtaposed with a list of quotations from other sources contradicting its main findings.

The choice of a particular strategy of persuasion and degree of importance attached to it may vary between different media discourses. Most adverts, for example, do not aim to achieve the same distancing effect as news reports: their primary aim is to draw the viewer into the text, in an act of identification. A personal relationship can be established and the impression of a dialogue created through the use of personal pronouns such as "you" and "we" and of rhetorical questions. The tone is often chatty, the language register less formal, and there can be a more overt appeal to the emotions. Statements, however, remain categorical, and the persuasive impact can be strengthened through the use of repetition and hyperbole. A process of mystification also takes place: the object's value or significance for the viewer lies in the fictional meanings created by the advert.

The narrative level

The next stage in the analysis is an examination of the narrative level. This level is more general and more abstract than the discursive level: it is the level of story structure, a structure that, according to the Paris School, underlies all discourse, be it scientific, sociological, artistic, and so on. It is at this point, then, that we apply two fundamental narrative models first elaborated by Greimas. These are known as the actantial narrative schema and the canonical narrative schema, and they jointly articulate the structure of the quest.

The actantial narrative schema

This model is a simplification of V. Propp's seven "spheres of action" or 31 narrative roles elaborated from his structural analysis of the Russian folktale. Greimas presents instead six key narrative functions (actantial roles), which together account for all possible relationships within a story, and indeed within the sphere of human action in general. As a model it is more manageable, and therefore of more practical use, than that of Propp.

The following questions should therefore be asked of a text:

(a) Who is the subject of the quest? The subject is usually the person or group of people most talked about, for example "the British army" or "the American president." It gives the overall perspective from which a media item is composed.

(b) Who or what is the object of the quest? Is there more than one object? The goal could be concrete, such as acquiring money, or abstract, such as acquiring knowledge.
(c) Does the subject have helpers and opponents? A helper can be a person, an object, or a quality. The opponent is an obstacle – for example a rock, or the attribute of laziness.

A variant of the opponent is the anti-subject. An anti-subject is a subject who, to achieve its goal, obstructs the quest of another subject. The stated quest of the Western powers in Afghanistan, for example, is to destroy the power of the Taliban. This quest is opposed by members of the Taliban itself, who are in a position of anti-subject to the West. It is important to analyze how quests are constructed in new stories and whether, for example, the alleged goal of a quest reflects the historical reality. The economic motivations for any particular course of action such as the invasion of another country are frequently ignored by the Western media.

(d) Who or what is the sender? What motivates the quest of the subject? Is it a person, an idea, a desire, or a sense of obligation?

The canonical narrative schema

This second model presents in detail the logical stages of a global quest. It mirrors the structure of mythical narratives where the hero, having embarked on a mission, has to go through a series of trials or tests.

Contract	*Competence*	*Performance*	*Sanction*
manipulation	qualifying test	decisive test	glorifying test

The contract The sender motivates the action and communicates the modalities of desire or necessity to the receiver. A contract is established, the receiver now becomes the subject of a quest. The James Bond films frequently open with an episode in which the hero is summoned and informed of the mission he is to accomplish. The contract is followed by three tests.
The qualifying test Here the subject must acquire the necessary competence to fulfill the mission. The hero must possess the ability to act (*pouvoir faire*) and/or the necessary knowledge/skills (*savoir faire*) to carry out the planned course of action. For example, to engage in battle, you need both weapons and the knowledge of how to use them.
The decisive test This represents the principal event for which the subject has been preparing where the object of the quest is at stake.
The glorifying test The outcome of the event is revealed and evaluated. Has the subject succeeded or failed in the quest?

The canonical narrative schema outlines the logical stages of human action. If a news item announces a victory (the sanction), then the preceding stages – those of the contract, competence, and performance – are presupposed. Not

every text gives equal weighting to each stage of the quest; indeed a particular stage can be omitted altogether. A quest may also be aborted if the qualifying test fails and competence is not acquired. As a specialist in the semiotic theory of law, Bernard Jackson (1990), has shown that a defendant in a trial is more likely to be acquitted, that is, more likely to convince the jury of the truth of her/his statements, if each stage of the quest can be accounted for: what is important is the overall narrative structure and not each individual element within the story.

News coverage and storytelling

An application of these two narrative models is particularly effective in uncovering the hidden ideological meanings of a media text and in rendering explicit the mythic values implicit in the narrative organization. The models are of particular relevance in the case of news reporting or magazine articles that claim for themselves the status of objective truth and therefore tend to avoid the use of explicit evaluative terms. Many news items foreground the structure of conflict, the struggle between a subject and an anti-subject – for example, between government and unions, police and demonstrators, or Western and non-Western countries. The scenario is often one of good/evil. Jonathan Benthall (1993) uses Propp's methodology to highlight the similarities between media stories about disaster relief in the Third World and folktales: the heroes come from the West, they are white and middle class, whereas the villains are usually black and are presented as greedy dictators or Marxist tyrants. He also elaborates on the roles of donor and false hero.

Indeed the constant reiteration of polemical structures at the implicit level can contribute to the demonizing process previously discussed, again raising serious ethical issues concerning the responsibility of the media. The anti-subject is often deprived of any coherent overall narrative or logic of action. In the coverage of the war in Afghanistan, attention is focused primarily on two stages: the stage of performance (decisive test) – that is, the confrontation with the Taliban; and the stage of sanction (glorifying test) – the announcement of victory or defeat. The result is that, in eyes of the public, the Taliban is associated uniquely with acts of violence, with the act of killing or being killed. We are given very little information about the Taliban's motivations: the position of sender is not manifested and the object of their global quest is either not mentioned or remains extremely blurred. A similar situation arises in traditional documentaries about animals, where the performance or decisive test is, more often than not, an act of killing. Interestingly, this denigration of other species would be contested in 1920 by the American semiotician Thomas Sebeok, for whom communication with the environment and with other life forms is the necessary condition for the continuation of life on earth (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2001, p. 38). Indeed, influenced by Sebeok, a new branch of semiotics, styled "semioethics," has emerged in the last few years where the ethical focus is on all aspects of life, from the biological to the sociocultural.

Advertising and storytelling

Storytelling or narrativity also plays a key role in media advertising. A media text brings into play two principal narratives: the story that unfolds within the advert; and the extra-textual story in which the viewer is constructed as the subject of a quest. Both stories highlight and dramatize the very process of transformation. A case in point is a recent advertisement for food supplements in *Cosmopolitan*, a women's magazine (February, 2012, p. 79). On the left is a picture of a very slim, glamorous-looking girl in a brightly colored gym outfit doing her exercises. She is jumping into the air and pushing away the Christmas chocolates she no longer eats. On the right is the text:

Goodbye Festive Flab
Goodbye Christmas Treats
Hello Protein
Hello New You

Beneath the large print is a text in smaller letters announcing the benefits of the slimming regime that the New Year will bring, followed by an image of the product and the logo "Maxitone: The Body You Deserve." The advert portrays the glorifying stage of the quest: the woman has achieved her object – the transformation of the self into the new perfect body image she has been seeking. The glorifying test presupposes the successful accomplishment of the earlier stages, that is, the decisive test, enacted in the act of eating the food, and the qualifying test, enacted in the actual purchase of the product. The product thus functions as helper and, as in the case of many adverts, it possesses magical qualities: like Aladdin's lamp or a magic wand, the food is immediately able to conjure up the desired transformation. The receiver of the advert, identifying with the image of the successful young woman – who is looking directly at us – immediately experiences a sense of lack or a fundamental dissatisfaction. In semiotic terms, the advert now becomes the sender of desire, and the receiver becomes the subject of a quest to fulfill this desire. At the unconscious level, the object of the quest is not the slimming product itself, but the specific values associated in the advert with it: female empowerment and physical and moral perfection ("The Body You Deserve"). The advert could also play into the deep-seated Faustian myth – the dream of personal transformation and eternal youth. Dissatisfaction with the body, the constant need for the new ("Hello New You"), promoted by adverts, in particular those of food and clothes, is, of course, a source of enormous wealth in a consumer society.

The deep level

This is the level of the elementary structure of meaning, that, is the level at which are articulated the fundamental abstract values of the text. These values are deemed to be transcultural. To arrive at these values, we look for core

underlying oppositions. To facilitate the task, it may be helpful to ask the following questions:

(a) Can we reduce all the oppositions at the discursive and narrative level to one or two umbrella oppositions that function as a common denominator for the whole text?
(b) What are the two most abstract poles of meaning between which the text moves?

It might then be helpful to map these oppositions onto a semiotic square. This was devised by Greimas in the 1970s and is the visual presentation of the elementary structure of meaning. An extremely lucid explanation – and defense – can be found in Floch's *Semiotics: Marketing and Communication* (Floch, 2001, pp. 20–23). Let us take, then, the example of the opposition (or semantic category) life versus death.

1 S1 and S2 are in a relation of opposition or contrariety (one term presupposes the other).
2 S1 and –S1 are in a relation of contradiction: –S1 negates S1. S2 and –S2 are also in a relation of contradiction: –S2 negates S2.
3 –S1 and S2 are in a relation of implication: –S1 implies S2 and, similarly, –S2 implies S1.

This square makes it possible to plot at an abstract level the process of transformation that takes place in any discourse. The uncovering of the fundamental values that generate a text is, of course, of particular importance in the case of media discourse – where, as previously illustrated, a process of mystification or spin-doctoring frequently takes place.

We may take as an example the opening section of the British prime minister's speech, given shortly after the riots of August 2011 and later published in the journal *New Statesman* on August 15, 2011 (Cameron, 2011). These riots were triggered by the killing of an unarmed black person by the police, and also by a stop-and-search policy targeted principally at the black population. Shops were looted and some buildings totally destroyed. David Cameron describes the rioting solely as an expression of moral collapse, employing explicit evaluative terms and phrases such as "organized crime," "irresponsibility," "selfishness," "indiscipline," "indifference to right and wrong," "laziness," and "those who never worked and never want to work." The story he tells is that of a collective subject whose actions are motivated by sheer greed – the desire to acquire material goods. An analysis of the deep level brings to light the fundamental age-old mythic opposition between the forces of evil, represented by protesters and rioters, and the forces of good, embodied by the government and the police. To remedy the situation, Cameron suggests a variety of different forms of punishment, which include an increase in the powers of the law and the withdrawal of welfare. The transformation envisaged by the government and announced in Cameron's policies can be mapped onto a semiotic square. A correlation between surface and deep levels can be made.

The pole S1 presents the initial state of affairs, as evoked in the rioting. This is negated at –S1 in the outlining of policies for remedying the situation, that is, in the government's virtual quest to defeat the anti-subject. The carrying out of these policies should then lead to, or imply, S2, that is, a reversal of the initial situation.

This square renders explicit the values and worldview of a traditional Conservative Party, calling into question Cameron's claim to represent a new, more compassionate brand of conservatism. All forms of social protest – and of criminal action – are viewed exclusively as the outcome of a moral decrepitude encouraged by the devil himself (the Labour Party), rather than as the expression of a sense of social injustice and anger, or as a reaction to specific governmental policies. The answer to the problem must therefore be increased punishment, as listed under –S1. The semiotic square can be seen as a particularly lucid rendering of the Protestant work ethic and of its close association with capitalism. As the French semiotician Denis Bertrand has affirmed, it is at the deep level that the worldview of the text enunciator – labeled "the true subject of enunciation" – emerges (Bertrand, 1985, 176).

Indeed the semiotic square continues to hold a particular fascination for students, as well as for professional semioticians in Europe and beyond. Bertrand, Dezé, and Missika (2007, pp. 29–62) use the model to analyze the different speeches, reproduced in the media, of the four candidates in the 2007 French presidential campaign. They construct a semiotic square that presents the different modes of persuasion that can be brought into play, that is, the different relationships each candidate adopts toward everyday reality. A political speech, although touching on the four corners presented below, will normally choose to foreground one particular pole, or one strategy of persuasion.

Shared lived experience The experience described here is subjective, empathetic, and participatory. This impression is created at the discursive level through the use of the personal pronouns "we," "I," "us" ("each of us," "I believe," "I want it because you want it") or of the collective plural ("young people," "the French"). As Bertrand and his colleagues (2007) point out, this pole dominates in the speeches of Ségolène Royal, who, unlike Nicholas Sarkozy, bases her analysis of the political situation on shared everyday experience. Interestingly, the same pole is also pronounced in several of President Obama's speeches, in particular in his election night victory speech (Obama, 2008).

The utopian The utopian describes how lived experience can be transformed ("the hopes of all of us," "the right to live together in peace"). It refers to projects and plans. It is, for example, a strong pole in those speeches of Cameron where he proclaims his belief in the Big Society.

Fictional discourse This pole relates to the use of fictional devices such as metaphor, imagery, and intertextual references. According to Bertrand and team (2007), it represents a dominant feature of many of Sarkozy's later speeches in the 2007 presidential campaign.

Realist analytical discourse This is lived experience presented objectively. It frequently involves an appeal to common sense.

The semiotic square, like semiotics itself, can have widely differing uses. Marketing companies, for example, employ semioticians in order to improve their

sales; and the media themselves are, of course, heavily reliant on advertising for their income. In his discussion of the development of brands and logos, the semiotician Erik Bertin (1999, pp. 27–43) points out the importance of an appeal to deep-seated, often unconscious values. He gives the example of an advert for the washing powder Omo picturing a traditional family of Breton sailors. While hanging up her washing, a woman describes her battle against the stains. Her efforts are, however, rewarded upon the return of the men of the family, whose clothes have remained clean in spite of their manual labor. On the surface, the advert connotes family unity brought about through the woman's efforts and the washing powder that restores cleanliness. At a deeper level, the text associates this unity with traditional gender roles and the promotion of the value of hard work. And, importantly, although brands constantly need to regenerate themselves, it is this underlying continuity of values that ensures the adherence of the customer to a particular product. To illustrate the point, Bertin gives the example of a similar Omo advert of the early nineties, but one in which the human family is replaced by monkeys: the gender positions remain, however, exactly the same. A similar situation can be detected in the majority of adverts on British TV, where the roles of women and men have not significantly altered in spite of changes in lifestyle and the emergence of a feminist movement.

It is also important to note here the role of intertextuality in the creation of brand identity and the importance of the wider social context or story. Floch (2001, pp. 165–194) compares the Apple logo with the logo of IBM, pointing out that these companies present two radically different conflicting worldviews. The IBM logo, reflecting the dominant Western episteme, advocates reason and abstraction (as suggested in the use of Egyptian font and the striped surface), whereas the Apple logo aligns itself with intuition and direct, unmediated knowledge.

Indeed, as the Apple logo may demonstrate, the semiotic approach can serve not only to challenge the status quo but also to posit alternative visions of the self and the world. The American semiotician Laura R. Oswald (2012, pp. 107–108) has presented a semiotic square in which the sharp gender oppositions of the nineties Macdonald's adverts – those of dominating/dominated, active/passive – are deconstructed, creating a new repositioning in which the female is also empowered. She also produces a new semiotic square for a nappy advert in which the cultural stereotype of motherhood (the Mommy myth) is subverted (Oswald, 2012, pp. 42–43). There are, of course, movements within the media themselves, as well as activist groups outside seeking to promote a more ethical awareness, for example in terms of the representation of the environment and of the portrayal of other peoples and cultures.

Later Developments: A Semiotics of the Senses

While refining and enriching the Greimassian schemas, the 1980s and 1990s saw a development of new theories heralding a change of emphasis or direction. There was a resurgence of interest in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907–1961), with increased attention focused on the body, the emotions, and the senses.

In a seminal text, Greimas (1987) introduces into semiotics the concept of beauty, that is, beauty apprehended as sensory bodily presence, as the unique way things reveal themselves to us before any preliminary codification. The concern here is with the emergence of meaning rather than with the end product. Although Greimas' own studies are confined to the literary text, his findings were developed and find fertile ground in media studies, in particular in relationship with advertising and film, where the appeal to the senses and to ecstatic experiences beyond the everyday becomes a further strategy of seduction. Floch (2000, pp. 63–84) explores the semiotics of taste in his study of an advert for the French *chef* Michel Bras; the same theme is later investigated by Jean-Jacques Boutaud and Eliseo Veron (2007, pp. 87–103), again in the field of marketing. In a highly accessible study, Bertrand (2005, pp. 37–48) analyzes the role of the body and senses in film and TV adverts of the early nineties that feature products such as mineral waters, chocolate, and shampoos. He demonstrates how a highly scientific language – cells, organs, calcium, vitamins – goes hand in hand with a concrete sensorial immediacy. Interestingly, in a very recent study, Fontanille (2012) takes three newspaper articles, written as witness accounts, and shows how the narrative is organized around the concrete spatial movements and sensory experiences of the reporter. He argues that their power of persuasion resides not only in an act of personal exploration involving chance encounters, but also in the analogies the reporter makes with similar situations, already known to or experienced by the reader. Fontanille is thus demonstrating how the language of journalism – in this case, I would venture, at its best – can combine a referential, linear discourse with the symbolic and aesthetic, with an appeal to the reader's memory and imagination.

Charles S. Peirce (1958)

The focus on a semiotics of the senses and on the emergence of meaning led to a revisiting of the thought of the American philosopher and semiotician Charles Peirce. His theories of the sign had initially been rejected by the Paris School – an attitude that contrasted with their warm reception in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Indeed, in England, Peirce's division of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols has for many years provided media students with a vocabulary for talking about visual images and nonverbal signs. He identifies three main types of signs: icons, indexes, and symbols. An icon is a sign that resembles the object it signifies (its referent) such as a portrait. An index is a sign related to or affected by its object, for instance a sundial that tells us the time, or smoke that points to a fire. A symbol, on the other hand, is a sign whose relationship to its object is entirely arbitrary or based on convention – such as the word *car*. The film shots on a "reality TV" program, for instance, could be considered iconic in that they resemble the object. They could not, however, be described as indexical, as they do not point to something that really happened.

It was during the 1990s that the two previously antithetical currents of thought began to merge, or rather to be regarded as complementary. Indeed, it was Peirce's

theory of signs, in particular the concepts of *firstness*, *secondness*, and *thirdness*, that played a central role in the emergence of a tensive semiotics and in the construction of a new semiotic square, which plotted gradual changes in terms of degrees of intensity and spatial presence. Firstness refers to a mode of being without reference to anything else. It is the realm of pure sensory or emotive qualities, for example, the sensation of "wetness." It is characterized by the indexical sign. The object or thing that is perceived belongs to the level of secondness, which involved the relation of a first ("wetness") to a second ("the rain"), producing the iconic sign. Thirdness is the level of conventional meaning, of the symbolic sign. "Wetness" and "rain" now become "the weather." What was termed by some the "new semiotics" was elaborated by Fontanille and Claude Zilberberg (1998) and further expounded by Fontanille in his *Semiotics of Discourse* (2006). Unlike the Greimassian semiotic square, which presents semantic concepts as something fixed, an end product, the tensive structure accounts for the actual process whereby meaning (*l'intelligible*) emerges from sensations and perceptions (*le sensible*). Before identifying an object, for example, we become aware of the presence of physical properties such as "hot" and "cold," which affect us to varying degrees of intensity (*firstness*). The new model, the elementary structure of tension, has been applied to film, photography, and advertising.

For media analysts, tensive semiotics does not perhaps possess the breadth of application or accessibility of earlier models. However, the exploration of the sensory and emotive dimension of meaning is an important contribution to the field and illustrates the intellectual dynamism and the permanent widening of frontiers that characterize the discipline of semiotics.

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5

Symbolic Interactionism and the Media

Norman K. Denzin

The merger of three streams of thought into a unified perspective on information technologies and social structure defines the pragmatic, interactionist contribution to the study of the media. This merger, which synthesizes the theories of Simmel (1950), Mead (1934), Innis (1950), Ong (2002), and McLuhan (1964), is best represented in the work of James Carey (Carey, 1989; Munson & Warren, 1997),[1] Carl Couch (Couch, 1995; Couch, Maines, & Shing-Ling, 1996), and David Altheide (2003, 2006). These projects are extended in the critical pedagogy (Denzin, 2010a) and interpretive communication paradigms (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, pp. 60–61).

Here I summarize and elaborate upon these legacies, offering my version of this project, rewriting it to fit a critical, interpretive, feminist, cultural studies approach to the analysis of information technologies, the media, the audience, and the political economy of communicative acts in everyday life.[2]

In the human disciplines there is only interpretation. We study interpretation and experience, not social acts. Interpretive interactionism seeks to examine those institutional, media sites were the existential stories that work their way into peoples' lives are produced. These epiphanic stories are examined in terms of the meanings they offer for everyday life. The existential nature of human group life is connected to the larger institutional, mass media apparatuses that provide specific narratives for specific groups or local cultures.

Following Mills, I assume that human beings live in a second-hand world. Existence is not solely determined by interaction or by social acts. Mills puts this forcefully:

> The consciousness of human beings does not determine their existence; nor does their existence determine their consciousness. Between the human consciousness and

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> material existence stand communications, and designs, patterns, and values which influence decisively such consciousness as they have. (Mills, l963, p. 375)

Information technologies (the mass media) mediate and define social life.

The Interactionist Tradition

Symbolic interactionism is that unique American sociological and social psychological perspective that traces its roots to the early American pragmatists James, Dewey, Peirce, and Mead. It has been called the loyal opposition in American sociology, the most sociological of social psychologies. Only recently has this perspective entered the field of psychology, where the works of Mead have been joined with the theories of Wittgenstein, Vygotsky, and Bakhtin.

A relatively new journal, *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, publishes work that connects the symbolic interactionist tradition with science studies, cultural psychology, and the Soviet tradition represented by the works of Vygotsky and others. The journal *Symbolic Interaction* and the serial *Studies in Symbolic Interaction: A Research Annual* routinely publish work by symbolic interactionists and by members of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction.

The term *symbolic* in the phrase "symbolic interaction" refers to the underlying linguistic foundations of human group life, just as the word *interaction* refers to the fact that people do not act toward one another, but interact with each other. By using the term *interaction*, symbolic interactionists commit themselves to the study and analysis of the developmental course of action that occurs when two or more persons (or agents) with agency (reflexivity) join their individual lines of action together into joint action.

Theories of agency and action

It is necessary to briefly take up the problems surrounding the concepts of *action* and *agency*. These terms bear directly on interactionist theories of the self and on the interaction process. *Action* references experiences that are reflexively meaningful to the person. *Agency* describes the locus of action, whether in the person, in language, or in some other structure or process. Theories of action and agency are common to the many theoretical branches of interpretive sociology, including phenomenology, linguistic philosophy, ethnomethodology, and symbolic interactionism. These theories are connected to the linguistic turn in twentieth-century social theory. They have been shaped by Wittgenstein's linguistic philosophy, by C. Wright Mills' arguments concerning vocabularies of motive, by Schutz's reworking of Weber's concept of meaningful action, by Peter Winch's application of Wittgenstein to the idea of a social science, by Blumer's extension of Mead to symbolic interactionism, by Goffman's dramaturgical sociology, by Garfinkel's ethnomethodological project, by Giddens's structuration

theory, by Habermas' theory of communicative action, and by various feminist theories that locate action and agency in the unconscious, or in the field of performance (Clough, 2007).

At issue in these formulations is the place of an autonomous, reflexive individual in the construction of meaningful action. That is: Do persons, as agents, create their own experience? Is agency – or meaning and intention – in the actor, in the experience, or in the social structure? Do persons, as Karl Marx argued, make history, but not under conditions of their own making? If history goes on behind people's backs, then structures, not persons as agents, make history. If this is the case, then the real subject of social psychology is not the person or a single individual. Rather external systems and discursive practices create particular subjectivitites and particular subjective experiences for the individual. Of course, this is not an acceptable position; for experience, structure, and subjectivity are dialogical processes.

To describe this process, Giddens uses the phrase "duality of structure," which is central to his theory of structuration (1979, 1981):

> According to the theory of structuration, all social action consists of social practices, situated in time-space, and organized in a skilled and knowledgeable fashion by human agents … A crucial move in this theory is an attempt to transcend the opposition between "action" theories and "institutional" theories … By the duality of structure I mean that the structured properties of social systems are simultaneously the *medium and outcome of social acts.* (Giddens, 1981, p. 19)

Every individual is a practical social agent, creating meaning and structure through personal action. Human agency is bounded and constrained by the very conditions that shape the duality of structure. Knowledgeable agents, human actors, are constrained by structural rules, by material resources, and by the structural processes connected to class, gender, race, ethnicity, nation, and community.

Interactionist assumptions

In its canonical form (Blumer, 1969), symbolic interactionism rests on the following root assumptions. First, "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Second, the meanings of things arise out of the process of social interaction. Third, meanings are modified through an interpretive process that involves self-reflective individuals symbolically interacting with one another (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Fourth, human beings create the worlds of experience in which they live. Fifth, the meanings of these worlds come from interaction, and they are shaped by the self-reflections that persons bring to their situations. Sixth, such self-reflection is "interwoven with social interaction and influences that social interaction" (Blumer, 1981, p. 153). Seventh, joint acts, their formation, dissolution, conflict and merger, constitute what Blumer calls the "social life of a human society." A society consists of the joint or social acts "which are formed and carried out by [its] members" (Blumer, 1981, p. 153).

Eighth, a complex interpretive process shapes the meanings that things have for human beings. This process is anchored in the cultural world, in the "circuit of culture" (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997, p. 3), where meanings are defined by the mass media – advertising, cinema, and television. This process is based on the *articulation* or interconnection of several distinct and contingent processes (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 3).

Political economy and circuits of meaning

In the circuits of cultural meaning, five interconnected processes – representation, identification, production, consumption, and regulation – influence one another (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 3). Cultural objects and experiences are *represented* in terms of salient cultural categories. These categories are directly connected to social and personal *identities*. These identities are attached to representations of family, race, age, gender, nationality, and social class. These objects and identities, are, in turn, located in an ongoing political economy.

A political economy is a complex, interconnected system. It structures the *production*, *distribution*, and *consumption* of wealth in a society. It determines the who, what, when, where, why, and how of wealth and power in everyday life; that is, who gets what income, at what time, in what place, for what labor, and why. This economy regulates the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural objects. It does so by repeatedly forging links between cultural objects (cars, clothing, food, houses), their material representations, and the personal identities of consumers as gendered human beings (see the discussion below).

Information Technologies

Interactionists argue that communication is culture. Communication as culture must always be studied contextually, ritually, and relationally. Communication is a process involving two or more people in an authority, accountable, exchange, charismatic, intimate, tyrannic, or representative relationship (see Altheide, 2003, p. 660; Carey, 1989, p. 18; Couch, 1995).

The ritual view of communication links information technologies as forms of communication to "terms such as 'sharing,' 'participation,' 'community,'" and quality of life (Carey, 1989, p. 18; Fackler, 2010; Fortner, 2010; Nerone, 2010, pp. 12–13). This leads to models of analysis centered on institutional structures, media logics, presentational formats, and interpretive frames (Altheide, 2003, pp. 665–666). "Today, all social institutions are media institutions" (Altheide, 2003, p. 666). Analysis interrogates the spatial and temporal biases, formats, and logics connected to specific institutional structures and specific information technologies, for example the new social media. In turn, this produces a concern for the monopolies of knowledge and power and for the forms of social change, cultural advantage, and social disorder that are connected to information technologies at specific historical moments (see Carey, 1989, pp. 149–150 on these points in Innis, 1950).

For the interactionists, information technologies change the forms of action that occur in any society. Couch (1995), for example, asserted that the particular consequences of each information technology (IT) is contingent on how the IT is contextualized in a social structure. These consequences are shaped by the maturation processes that fit the IT to the contextualizing social structure. A maturation process involves three elements: (1) the forms of relatedness that organize the social actions of those who use the IT; (2) the forms of connectedness that prevail between ITs and their users; and (3) the formatting qualities of the ITs.

Elaborating on Blumer (1990), Couch (1995) proposes that each IT enters into an existing social structure, wherein it may alter, challenge, change, modify, or support existing group formations (Altheide, 2003, p. 666). Any society can be interpreted in terms of the larger state structures that organize daily life. Couch isolated three types of state structures: market-, temple-, and palace-centered. These state structures contextualize the use of specific ITs. At the same time each IT creates the conditions for new forms of non-face-to-face communication. These new forms rest on new social acts that become intertwined with existing (and new) social relationships. Hence the consequences of an IT can never be directly attributed to the IT itself (technological determinism is dead), but must always be anchored in the historical setting, which absorbs and gives meaning to the new form of communication.

ITs can be used in multiple ways: to inform, to gather information or wealth, to entertain, to help organize one's life, to control others. ITs can unilaterally transmit information to many (Internet forums, weblogs, wikis, podcasts, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook), or they can be used bilaterally, to transmit information from person to person (the telephone, some forms of e-mail). ITs may be collective or individualistic enterprises and they define, create, and inscribe information that is varyingly ephemeral. The information conveyed by an IT rests on evocative (emotional) and referential symbols.

In *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*, Altheide (2006) focused on the US media after 9/11/01. He demonstrated how the use of evocative fear formats, threat formats, and color-coded terrorism reports contributed to a politics of fear that permeated everyday life. Fighting terrorism was linked to patriotism. Fear was turned into a commodity. The invasion of Iraq was justified through a massive propaganda campaign. The formats for reporting the war reinforced the reasons for going to war and celebrated the heroes. The media formats did not have a place for anti-war reporting.

The Task of the Media

The mass media, in whatever form, function primarily for economic, not for social purposes. Information technologies turn human beings into consumers of commodities – including information, which is better termed "info-tainment." As Rotzoll and Haefner (1990, p. 56) observe, "the information provided in purely

competitive markets … is advertising."[3] The information technologies of the late twentieth-century societies package and sell human experience, turning it into a commodity that has entertainment value. Humans are taught to be consumers of this experience. They are also taught (see below) how to be consumers of the other commodities that are marketed by and in the mass media.

After Smythe (1994, p. 285), I understand that the basic task of the mass media is to make this second-hand world natural and invisible to its participants. Barthes (1972, p. 11) elaborates upon the same idea, noting that the media dress up reality, giving it a sense of naturalness, so that "Nature and History [are] confused at every turn." This is the case because the media's purposes are to "operate itself so profitably as to ensure unrivalled respect for its economic importance in the [larger cultural and social] system" (Smythe, 1994, p. 285).

The prime goals of the mass media complex are four-fold; they aim to create audiences who (1) become consumers of the products advertised in the media while (2) engaging in consumption practices that conform to the norms of possessive individualism endorsed by the capitalist political system and (3) while adhering to a public opinion that is supportive of the strategic polices of the state; as for (4), more on it below. At this level, the information technologies of late capitalism function to create audiences who use the income from their own labor to buy the products that their labor produces (Smythe, 1994, p. 285).

Accordingly, the primary commodity that the information technologies produce is not information, messages, images, meaning, or education. The commodity "form of mass-produced, advertiser-supported communications [under monopoly capitalism] … is audiences" (Smythe, 1994, p. 268). The fourth goal of the media is clear: to do everything it can to make consumers think, as audience members, that they are not commodities. Herein lies the importance of cultural narratives and stories that reinforce the epiphanic nature of human existence under late twentieth-century capitalism. These stories give us the illusion of a soul, of structural freedom and free will. In fact we only live the histories and stories that are handed down to us by the mass mediated ghosts of the past (Marx, 1983, p. 287).

A dual commodity form structures the work of the communication industries: the consumer as a commodity form must be connected to a cultural object, which is a media and cultural artifact (see Altheide, 2003). This cultural object is a social text and a commodity. Neither consumers as commodities nor media artifacts can be separated from the larger institutional spheres and cultural codes that organize everyday life (Grossberg, 2010). As a text, the object is first presented within an advertisement context. This context connects the consumer to the product in an informational, image, personalized, or lifestyle format. The ad manipulates Couch's evocative symbols, creating a need and a desire for the need to be met; and it offers a product (a brand) that will meet that need. The ad's format shows the person how to use the object and how to associate its use to valued emotional and cultural experiences. Once the commodity is purchased, the consumer's needs and desires quickly decline in relevance.

In order for an ad to work, a specific audience for the product must be created. Audiences are market categories created by the media and the advertising industry.[4] These market segments must be interactionally and emotionally connected to products and their consumption. Audiences come from two sources: the media that define a specific product (e.g. fanzines), and the surrounding cultural order. Preexisting and socially created social formations based on race, age, gender, class, place of residence, education, political allegiance, urban versus rural background, regional location, religion, and family connect persons to specific products, social identities, and cultural needs (see Lengel & Martin, 2010). Emotional needs specific to these market categories are then created. These potential users are targeted for media campaigns focused on new cultural commodities. In this way does the institution of advertising use the information technologies of the culture.

I assume that gendered and raced consumers bring many different cultural meanings (dominant, negotiated, subversive) to these cultural commodities and to the social texts that define them (Lengel & Martin, 2010; Valdivia, 2010). These meanings and the cultural practices associated with them are complexly embedded in culturally defined gender, racialized, and class-based codes. Cultural practices are anchored in specific sites, which can be read as cultural texts (e.g. the family television room). In these sites readers, technologies, and social texts come together. Therein are produced forms of interpretive resistance to this dominant hegemonic cultural order and to the meanings associated with a specific information technology and the texts it offers for consumption.

To summarize. Media texts, connected to specific ITs, contain "structured sets of (often contradictory) values." Audience members mediate those contradictions in ways that express their personal values and the "structured values of the social order" (Fiske, 1991, p. 465). Thus the interpretive culture of everyday life "is best described through metaphors of struggle or antagonism" (Fiske, 1989, p. 47) and ongoing negotiation and conflict.

The resistance assumption attempts to mediate the hegemonic views (which are overdetermined, as a result of technological determinism) and the active audience's views of the media in terms of their place in everyday social life. At the same time the assumption recognizes that the postmodern period is defined by fascistic and xenophobic tendencies that are morally conservative, homophobic, racist, and sexist. Active audience resistance at the local level can do little to change these recurring, large-scale cultural facts of life. Indeed in some cases resistance may be altogether absent.

The relationship between an IT and the audience is complex, always mediated by liberal capitalist ideology, cultural objects, social texts, the contexts of production, class position, gender, race, ethnicity, and the larger social order. The uses to which an object is put inevitably exceed simple, direct effects or specific gratifications. These objects are fitted to the ongoing interactional world, where persons negotiate meanings and identifiers in relation to themselves, the object, its text, and its context.

Audience, text, structure, and lived experience are the key terms in this critical interpretive approach. In contrast to what happens in much work in the effects

tradition (see Nerone, 2010; Valdivia, 2010), there is here no attempt to treat audiences as market categories and sites where media effects and needs are played out. Nor are media structures conceptualized as macro formations that produce stable (and overdetermined) effects on audiences. Media texts are not seen as pure conduits for these ideological messages, or as commodities that only reproduce dominant cultural ideologies. At the level of the ethnography of communication processes, there is little interest in "scientific" studies that connect audiences (as formations) to media sites (TV shows) and cultural texts as sole carriers of ideology.

The critical interpretive approach examines audiences as processes that outlast any given media event sent by a specific IT (see Fiske, 1994, p. 196). Audiences are ongoing sites where situated identities are negotiated in the face of cultural texts and institutional structures that attempt to create specific needs and gratifications. Texts (postings) are not read just as the carriers of ideological meanings, or just as commodities. They are sites of political negotiation. Audience members are empirical subjects (not textual constructions) who find themselves in gendered, class, and racially specific relations with one another.

The cultural practices that are brought to a text and its surrounding information technology always produce situated interpretations based on multiple and conflicting meanings and on social relationships. At this level, as Grossberg argues, the politics of culture

> involves the work of placing particular practices into particular relations or contexts, and of transforming one set of relations, one context into another. The identity and effects of a practice are not given in advance; they are not determined by its origin or by some intrinsic feature of the practice itself. (Grossberg, 1993, p. 90)

This system is in need of critique.

Media Reform and the Crisis of Democracy

The contemporary US media system is characterized by corporate concentration (Kellner, 2005, p. 183). Mainstream media, from radio through network and cable TV to newspapers, book publishing, film studios, and movie theaters, are now controlled by a small number of corporations (McChesney, 2000, pp. 17–19). This concentration of power has produced a crisis of democracy. Over the last two decades corporate media have been controlled by conservatives, who promote the interests of the corporations that own them (Kellner, 2005, p. 183). This concentration of power has produced a media culture that turns politics into entertainment and spectacles. This apparatus creates moral crises. It deploys attack machines that rely on misinformation.

In the USA, over the last decade, the right-wing Republican media machine has advanced a conservative agenda that features wars on immigrants, on persons of color, on women's rights, on the environment, on education, on terror, and on

the working poor. This machine has repeatedly attacked those media critics who have challenged its versions of reality, calling them unpatriotic.

> If a media institution broadcast or published material deemed hostile by the Right their shock troops bombarded the offending institution with e-mails, phone calls, and letters and attacking them for exhibiting bias against the nation. (Kellner, 2005, pp. 181–182)

The effect of this negative media culture has been to mute the investigative function of traditional journalism. But the "only way a democratic social order can be maintained is for mainstream media to assume their democratic function of critically informing … the public" (Kellner, 2005, p. 183; see Fortner, 2010).

Fake news

Under the two presidential terms of George W. Bush, fake media were used to justify the war in Iraq. Fake media events and news were created (Denzin, 2007; Rich, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006). Through a series of carefully choreographed presentations involving aerial and ground photographs, statistics, and excerpts from secret intelligence memos, Bush and his staff based the case for war on the threats of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to the world order (Hersh, 2005, p. 235). They were hesitant, however, to sell the argument for war against Saddam Hussein in August 2002. Andrew Card, speaking for the Bush Adminstration, is quoted as stating: "From a marketing point of view, you don't introduce new products in August" (Rich, 2005b, p. 12). Today we know there were no WMDs. There were no links between 9/11 and Saddam. Cheering crowds did not greet American soldiers when they marched into Baghdad. Indeed, as Rich observes, "Democracy was hijacked on the way to war" (Rich, 2005b, p. 12).

The administration took to a new level the meaning of the staged news event, borrowing its techniques of news management from Jon Stewart, host of the *Daily Show*. Fake newsmen looking like real newsmen used the practices of real news. "The administration paid $240,000 to Armstrong Williams for delivering *faux* journalistic analyses of the No Child Left Behind Act" (Rich, 2005a, p. 1).

Media reform

A multilevel media reform movement attempts to address these threats to democracy. The media reform movement includes calls for alternative media, stronger anti-monopoly laws, new media ownership regulations, a revitalization of public television and community and public radio, improved public access television, "an expansion of investigative and public service journalism and full democratic utilization of the Internet" (Kellner, 2005, p. 183). Critical media literacy initiatives and public journalism are also vital elements in this reform movement. Of equal importance are the works of critical documentary filmmakers

and the new technologies associated with digital video and photography. The presence of a lively progressive blogosphere is pivotal.

But, above all, critically informed citizens are a prerequisite for a healthy democracy. Citizens must have access to alternative views and to information that is critical of those who are in power. Democratic media reform is thus essential to a revitalization of the democratic process in the US. Demands for media reform must include a call for a new media culture.

This will be a culture embedded in a communitarian ethic – an ethic based on the norms of justice, human solidarity, mutuality, empowerment, the sacredness of human dignity, covenant making, and community (Christians, Ferre, & Fackler, 1993, pp. 14–17, 93). Communitarian journalism is committed to civic transformation, to communitarian citizenship, to dialogue, to strong communities marked by justice and democratic discourse (Christians et al., 1993, pp. 14–17, 93).

A press "nurtured by communitarian ethics requires more of itself than fair treatment of events deemed worthy of coverage. Under the notion that justice itself – and not haphazard public enlightenment – is the *telos* of the press, the news-media system stands under obligation to tell the stories that justice requires" (Christians et al., 1993, p. 93).

Democracy and Critical Pedagogy

Informed by James Carey's theories of democracy and his ritual model of communication, I enter a conversation that interrogates the place of critical pedagogy in a free democratic society (Carey, 1989, 1997a, 1997b; Munson & Warren, 1997). Critical pedagogy is a key component in Carey's intellectual project. With Carey, I seek a democratic pedagogy crafted for life in America since September 11, 2001 (Denzin, 2007).

A genuine democracy requires hope, dissent, and criticism. Critical pedagogy is a strategic means to these political ends. Paraphrasing Carey, as quoted by Rosen, "critical pedagogy and democracy are really names for the same thing … In our present predicament all terms of the political equation – democracy, public opinion, public discourse, the press – are up for grabs" (Carey, quoted by Rosen, 1997, pp. 192, 196).

The "democratic character of critical pedagogy is defined largely through a set of basic assumptions" (Giroux & Giroux, 2006, p. 27). Educational and everyday realities "are constructed in and through people's linguistic, cultural, social and behavioral interactions which both shape and are shaped by social, political, economic and cultural forces" (Fishman & McLaren, 2005, p. 425). It is not enough to understand any given reality. There is a need to "transform it with the goal of radically democratizing educational sites and societies" (Fishman & McLaren, 2005, p. 425). Critical pedagogy disrupts those cultural practices that instill hegemonic ways of seeing and thinking. Educators, as transformative intellectuals, actively shape and lead this project. As advocates of critical pedagogy, they are aware of the many ways in which popular culture functions as a form of political education.

Pedagogical practices are always moral and political. The political is always performative. The performative is always pedagogical. Critical pedagogy subjects structures of power, knowledge, and practice to critical scrutiny, demanding that they be evaluated "in terms of how they might open up or close down democratic experiences" (Giroux & Giroux, 2006, p. 28). Critical pedagogy scholars hold systems of authority accountable by offering critical reading of texts, by creating radical educational practices, and by promoting critical literacy (Giroux & Giroux, 2006, p. 28).

Moreover, critical pedagogy encourages resistance to the "discourses of privatization, consumerism, the methodologies of standardization and accountability, and the new disciplinary techniques of surveillance" (Giroux & Giroux, 2006, p. 28). Critical pedagogy provides the tools for understanding how cultural and educational practices contribute to the construction of neoliberal conceptions of identity, citizenship, and agency.

The critical imagination

Democratic public life in America is under siege. The far right, the Tea Party, the reactionaries and neoliberals have all but overtaken the languages and politics of daily life. They are succeeding in placing Americans in a permanent, open-ended cultural and economic war against women, workers, immigrants, gays, and the young. The Occupy Wall Street movement is a tip of the iceberg; the rich get richer and the poor and disenfranchised stay poor. A radical democratic imagination enters the spaces of this new public sphere. It serves to redefine the concept of civic participation and public citizenship. This imagination turns the personal into the political. Struggle, resistance, and dialogue are key features of its pedagogy. The rights of democratic citizenship are extended to all segments of public and private life, from the political to the economic, from the cultural to the personal. This pedagogy seeks to regulate market and economic relations in the name of social justice and environmental causes.

The critical imagination is democratic, pedagogical, and interventionist. Building on Freire (1998, p. 91) and Carey (1997a, p. 115) this imagination dialogically inserts itself into the world, provoking conflict, curiosity, criticism, and reflection. Extending Freire (1998), critical pedagogy contributes to a conception of education and democracy as pedagogies of freedom. As praxis, performance ethnography and indigenous theater are ways of acting on the world in order to change it. Enacting a performance-centered ethics, dialogic performances provide materials for critical reflection on radical democratic educational practices. In so doing, performance ethnography enacts an ethical and moral theory of selfhood and being. The purpose of "the particular type of relationality" we call "research ought to enhance … moral agency, moral discernment, critical consciousness and a radical politics of resistance" (Christians, 2002, p. 409; see Christians, 2000). In these acts we contribute to a public conversation, to a dialogue that puts the very notions of democracy and freedom, citizen, and patriot into play (Carey, 1997b, pp. 208, 216).

As an interventionist pedagogy, the critical imagination seeks and promotes an ideology of hope that challenges and confronts hopelessness. It understands that

hope, like freedom, is "an ontological need." Hope is the desire to dream, the desire to change, the desire to improve human existence. Hopelessness is "but hope that has lost its bearings" (Freire, 1999, p. 8).

Hope is ethical. Hope is moral. Hope is peaceful and nonviolent. Hope seeks the truth of life's sufferings. Hope gives meaning to the struggles to change the world. Hope is grounded in concrete performative practices, in struggles and interventions that espouse the sacred values of love, care, community, trust, and well-being (Freire, 1999, p. 9). As a form of pedagogy, hope confronts and interrogates cynicism, the belief that change is not possible or is too costly. Hope works from rage to love. It articulates a progressive politics that rejects "conservative, neoliberal postmodernity" (Freire, 1999, p. 10). Hope rejects terrorism. Hope rejects the claim that peace comes at any cost.

Carey extends these notions of hope, arguing that "the reason I have always been drawn to John Dewey and the American pragmatists is that he and they were a group of people who lived with hope, and that hope shines through their writing" (1997a, p. 115).

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The critical democratic imagination is pedagogical. First, as a form of instruction, it helps persons think critically, historically, sociologically. Second, as critical pedagogy, it exposes the pedagogies of oppression that produce and reproduce oppression and injustice (see Freire, 2001, p. 54). Third, it contributes to an ethical self-consciousness that is critical and reflexive. It gives people a language and a set of pedagogical practices that turn oppression into freedom, despair into hope, hatred into love, doubt into trust. Fourth, in turn, this self-consciousness shapes a critical racial self-awareness. This awareness contributes to utopian dreams of racial equality and racial justice.

The use of this imagination by persons who have previously lost their way in this complex world is akin to being "suddenly awakened in a house with which they had only supposed themselves to be familiar" (Mills, 1963, p. 8). They now feel that they can provide themselves with critical understandings that undermine and challenge "older decisions that once appeared sound." Their critical imagination enlivened, persons "acquire a new way of thinking … in a word by their reflection and their sensibility, they realize the cultural meaning of the social sciences" (Mills, 1963, p. 8). They realize how to make and perform changes in their own lives, how to become active agents by shaping the history that shapes them.

A Performative Communication Studies

I am attempting to retheorize the grounds of critical communications studies, redefining the political and the cultural in performative and pedagogical terms. The discourses of postmodern (auto)ethnography provide a framework against which all other forms of writing about the politics of the popular under global capitalism are judged.

In this model, a performative, pedagogical field of cultural studies becomes autoethnographic. The autoethnographer becomes a version of McLaren's (1997a, 1997b) reflexive flaneur/flaneuse, and Kincheloe's (2005) critical bricoleur, the "primordial ethnographer" (McLaren, 1997a, p. 144), who lives "within postmodern, postorganized, late capitalist culture" (McLaren, 1997a, p. 144; 1997b, p. 295) and functions as a critical theorist, as an urban ethnographer, as an ethnographic agent, as a Marxist social theorist (Madison, 2010, p. 18; McLaren, 1997a, pp. 164, 167).

The radical, performance (auto)ethnographer functions as a cultural critic, a version of the modern anti-hero. The critical autoethnographer's conduct is justified, because this is no longer just one individual's case history or life story. Within the context of history, autoethnography becomes the "dial of the instrument that records the effects of a particular stage of civilization upon a civilized individual" (Spender, 1984, p. ix). Authoethnogaphy is both dial and instrument.

The autoethnographer functions as a universal singular, a single instance of more universal social experiences. This subject is summed up, and for this reason universalized, by his or her epoch; we resume it by reproducing ourselves in it as a singularity (see Sartre, 1963, p. ix). Every person is like every other person – but like no other person. The commitment, as McLaren argues, is to a theory of praxis that is purposeful, "guided by critical reflection and a commitment to revolutionary praxis" (1997a, p. 170).

A commitment to critical performance pedagogy gives performance studies a valuable lever for militant, utopian cultural criticism. In *Impure Acts*, Giroux (2000) calls for a practical, performative view of pedagogy, politics, and cultural studies. He seeks an interdisciplinary project that would enable theorists and educators to form a progressive alliance, "connected to a broader notion of cultural politics designed to further racial, economic, and political democracy" (Giroux, 2000, p. 128). This project anchors itself in the worlds of pain and lived experience and is accountable to these worlds. It enacts an ethic of respect. It rejects the traditional denial, by the West and Western scholars, of respect, humanity, self-determination, citizenship, and human rights to indigenous peoples (Smith, 1999, p. 120).

Participatory performance action inquiry

Drawing on the complex traditions embedded in participatory action research (Fine et. al., 2003), critical performance pedagogy implements a commitment to participation and performance *with*, not *for*, community members. Amplifying Fine et al. (2003, pp. 176–177), this project builds on local knowledge and experience developed at the bottom of social hierarchies. Following Smith's (1999) lead, participatory performance work honors and respects local knowledge and customs and practices and incorporates those values and beliefs into participatory performance action inquiry (Fine et. al., 2003, p. 176).

Work in this participatory activist performance tradition gives back to the community, "creating a legacy of inquiry, a process of change, and material resources to enable transformations in social practices" (Fine et. al., 2003, p. 177).

Through performance and participation, the scholar develops a "particiaptory mode of consciousness" (Bishop, 1998, p. 208) and understanding. This helps shape the participant-driven nature of the inquiry and folds the researcher, as a performer, into the narrative and moral accountability structures of the group.

This project works outside the university and its classrooms, treating the spaces of the academy as critical public spheres, as sites of resistance and empowerment (Giroux, 2000, p. 134). Critical pedagogy resists the increasing commercialization and commodification of higher education. It contests the penetration of neoliberal values into research parks, classrooms, and the curriculum.

A commitment to critical pedagogy in the classroom can be an empowering, dialogical experience. The instructional spaces become sacred spaces. In them students take risks and speak from the heart, using their own experiences as tools for forging a critical race consciousness. The critical discourse created in this public sphere is then taken into other classrooms, into other pedagogical spaces, where a militant utopianism is imagined and experienced.

Pedagogically and ideologically, the performative becomes an act of doing (Giroux, 2000, p. 135), a dialogical way of being in the world, a way of grounding performances in the concrete situations of the present. The performative becomes a way of interrogating how "objects, discourses, and practices construct possibilities for and constraints on citizenship" (Nelson & Gaonkar, 1996, p. 7; also quoted in Giroux, 2000, p. 134). This stance casts the cultural critic in the role of a critical citizen, a person who collaborates with others in participatory action projects that enact militant democratic visions of public life, community, and moral responsibility (Giroux, 2000, p. 141). In these pedagogical spaces there are no leaders and followers, there are only co-participants, persons working together to develop new lines of action, new stories, new narratives, in a collaborative effort (Bishop, 1998, p. 207). "We must find a new story to perform … we must preserve a model of free democratic society" (Kittridge, 1987, p. 87).

Homegrown democracy

I felt a great excitement when I saw Garrison Keillor's new book *Homegrown Democrat* (2004). I thought, here is a man who thinks deeply about democracy and these troubling times we are living in. He'll pull me out of my depression. He'll help me address Kittridge's challenge. I want to live in a new story. So I bought the book. To my delight, I felt right at home. Keillor dedicates his book "to all of the good democratic-farmer laborites of Minnesota." These are my people, farmers from the heartland. Democrats.

Homegrown Democracy is a short version of Keillor's autobiography. It is also his attack on Bush, the never-ending Iraqi War, the neo-cons, and the conservative Tea Party Republicans. At its center is Keillor's celebration of the values that mean-spirited Republicans, corporate shills, hobby cops, misanthropic frat boys, and gun fetishists have attacked. The Republicans have broken the civic compact, the simple code of the golden rule that underlies Midwestern civility. The politics of kindness.

The obligation to defend the weak against the powerful. "I didn't become a Democrat because I was angry," he writes. "I'm a Democrat because I received a good education in the public schools of Anoka, Minnesota, and attended a great university and when I was 18, John F. Kennedy ran for president."

This is my story! I attended excellent public schools in Iowa City, Iowa. I attended a great university, the University of Iowa. And, much to the ire of my Republican grandfather, I voted for John F. Kennedy for president. Like Keillor I worked to put myself through college. I discovered classical music, lecture halls, libraries, concerts, plays, opera, modern art, jazz, Dave Brubeck, great books, sociology, classic literature, professors who cared about teaching, all-night cafes, coffee shops, existentialism, Marxism, Sartre, Camus, Céline, Hemingway, C. Wright Mills, folk music, the civil rights and anti-war movements.

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I'm angry at politicians who wait to see which way the wind is blowing before they commit a political act requiring honesty and courage. I'm angry at Democrats who think the good Democrat is homegrown. I'm not sure homegrown works any longer. My homegrown was narrow and provincial – and white. In my Lake Wobegon the golden rule, the politics of kindness, and the obligation to defend the weak and the poor only extended to those folks who were like the rest of us.

I agree we have a moral obligation to bequeath this world to our grandchildren in better shape than we found it in. But it is not just our grandchildren to whom this world is bequeathed. This is a global project. I know it must be local, but I do not think it can be entirely built from the values that circulate in Keillor's imaginary pastoral utopia. And this saddens me, because for a long time I have liked going to Lake Wobegon at the end of a hard week. I'm not so sure I can do this any longer.

I must look elsewhere for my alternative model of democracy. "I envision a democracy founded in a social justice that is not yet" (Weems, 2002, p. 3).

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James Carey notes that the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights coincided with the war in the Persian Gulf – the Gulf War of 1941. America entered that war without a real conversation about our foreign policy and our domestic policies. Nor was there a debate about life after the cold war and the end (we thought) of internationalism (Carey, 1997b, p. 226). Bush's second war coincided with the Patriot Act and with massive assaults on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights. An Orwellian climate took over public discourse in America, and we have yet to have serious conversations about America's place in the new global order.

To invoke and paraphrase William Kittridge (1987, p. 87), we are struggling "to revise our dominant mythology … to find a new story to inhabit, to fine new laws to control our lives, laws designed to preserve a model of a free democratic society based on values learned from a shared mythology."

The ground upon which we stand has dramatically shifted. The neoconservatives have put in place a new set of myths, performances, narratives, and stories and a new set of laws, which threaten to destroy what we mean by freedom and democracy (Giroux, 2006; Goodall, 2010). Just as we thought we were through with the nightmare that started on 9/11/01, it all came falling down again.

Where to begin: the financial crashes of 2008 and 2009, the bailout of Detroit, the collapse of the housing markets and the subprime mortgage crisis, the massive consumer credit card debt, the high unemployment, the voter backlash, the rise of a reactionary Tea Party, the overly racist invective of talk radio (Newman & Giardina, 2011, pp. 214–215), the vilification of President Obama? And then there are the "birthers," tax cuts for the rich, the repeal of healthcare reforms, deep cuts in education and welfare, right-wing evangelicalism, rampant gender and racial prejudice, toxic messages from extremists (Goodall, 2010, pp. 140–149). The culture has moved far to the right, and the right has taken over public discourse.

We need new counter-narratives, progressive challenges that model social justice, new acts of activism like the Occupy Wall Street movement, redefinitions of patriotism, democracy, freedom, community, love, compassion. We need to counter neoliberal accounting models that fuel an audit culture and diminish our ability to provide humane social services to those in need. We need an expanded critical social justice agenda to cover everything from immigration policy to global warming, women's right to choose, and gay access to marriage; we need new core narratives that ennoble the human spirit and advance the causes of a progressive and humane social democracy (Goodall, 2010, pp. 166–168).

Scholars in critical communication studies must ask a series of questions. How can we use the aftermath of the most recent crises in America as a platform for rethinking what is meant by democracy and freedom in today's world? Can we revise our dominant mythologies about who we are? Can we fashion a narrative that allows us to reinvent and reimagine our laws in ways that express a critical pedagogy of hope, liberation, freedom, and love? Can performance studies help us chart our way into this new space? Can we take back what has been lost?

Conclusion

Critical pedagogy and criticial communucation studies offer transformative intellectuals a method, a theory, and a set of practices for putting the sociological imagination to work. This project involves constructing and enacting pedagogies of hope and freedom, ways of keeping the idea of a radical democracy alive. On this, let James W. Carey have the last word, even as he paraphrases Benjamin Franklin:

Carey and Franklin

> We have a government;
> a republic,

if you can keep it,
if you can keep it. (Carey, 1997b, p. 207)

Chorus (Norman K. Denzin)
Can we keep it?
Can we keep our discipline, too?

Notes

1 Carey (1989, pp. 14–18) argues that American theories of communication have tended to stress the transmission (sender–receiver), and not the ritual (communication-as-culture) model of the communication process. In this model culture means "a common ground of moral understanding ordering the lives of diverse people" (Christians, Rotzoll, & Fackler, 1991, p.418), and through the communication process "we celebrate, draw and repel, spar with one another, create societies, and express our [cultural] values" (Christians et al., 1991, p. 159). Carey locates an early version of the ritual model in the Chicago School. However, this view was soon replaced by the transmission behavioral model, which was then connected to the direct effects tradition, the social structural tradition, and the uses and gratifications tradition. More recently at least three cultural studies approaches to communication have emerged: the articulation stance of Grossberg (1993); Carey's (1989) ritual view of communication as cultural model, and the Fiske–Morley conjunctural, power–ideology framework, which is also associated with the new "active audience" ethnographic approach to the media (see Fiske, 1991, 1994; Morley, 1986). Couch's framework implicitly sits at the center of these cultural active audience approaches, while maintaining a commitment to the Canadian critical theory approach of Innis, McLuhan and Smythe (on this perspective, see Guback, 1994, pp. 264–265).

2 I draw from Denzin 1992, 1995, 2003, 2007, 2010a, 2010b, and 2010c.

3 This is not to discount the broader purposes the media serve in a democratic society, which include providing information concerning public life, as well as providing "enlightened consumer information and entertainment programs with redeeming value" (Christians, Rotzoll, & Fackler, 1991, p. 413).

4 But see the discussion of audiences below, which elaborates on the traditional meaning of audience as spectators or viewers of a performance. On this view, an audience becomes a group of interacting individuals who form their own meanings of a cultural text (or object).

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6

Patterns in the Use of Theory in Media Effects Research

W. James Potter

The use of theory in the production of a scholarly literature is a key indicator about how systematically scholars in a field generate research studies and integrate those findings into knowledge structures about their phenomenon of interest. This chapter examines patterns in the way theory is used in the scholarly field concerned with media effects.

Typically, scholarly fields build knowledge about their phenomenon of interest in a three-stage process (Miller & Nicholson, 1976). The first stage involves asking questions about which components there are to the phenomenon, how those components should be conceptualized, and how they relate to one another. The second stage of inquiry is observation, where scholars employ various methods to generate information to answer those questions. The third stage of inquiry focuses on integrating findings from the research literature into their own theories, which are sets of general propositions that offer tentative explanations about the phenomenon under study. These explanations are then tested in future research, where they are shown to have support or they are falsified – in which case direction is provided to refine the explanations. These three stages are linked in a cyclical process in which research generates better tentative explanations, and these in turn stimulate better questions and help researchers construct better conceptualizations, better measures, better methods, and more valuable findings. When a component within this cycle is missing, the cycle breaks down, which leads to either an inefficient generation of knowledge (e.g., researchers waste effort inventing the same "wheel") or a generation of faulty knowledge (researchers' mistakes are not identified and then corrected in subsequent studies). Because theory is an essential tool in making sense of an observed reality and in guiding the collection and evaluation of evidence (McQuail, 2005), the prevalence of theory in a scholarly

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field tells us how developed that field is (i.e., whether its focus is on asking questions or on systematically constructing answers that build an integrated base of knowledge).

This chapter is structured to answer four questions. First, to what extent are theories prevalent in the literature on media effects? Second, what are the most often used theories in that literature? Third, what parts of the media effects phenomenon attract the greatest use of theory? And, fourth, what are the implications of the current practices for the development of scholarship about media effects?

Prevalence of Theories

As scholarly fields age and their literatures grow larger, we expect to see a shift away from exploratory research and toward theory-driven research. New fields must necessarily focus on questions, as they search for the most useful conceptualizations and methods to begin generating useful knowledge about their focal phenomenon; thus new scholarly fields are characterized by a high proportion of their literature being generated by questions. Then, as the literature grows, scholars begin organizing findings into theories, which serve to integrate those findings into explanations that have achieved the strongest support – explanations that also serve to guide future research by clearly highlighting certain conceptualizations and methods while avoiding the ones found to be faulty in previous research. Thus key indicators of the degree of scholarly development within a field are the increasing number of theories generated, an increasing proportion of the literature generated by theories, and an increase in the amount of programmatic research.

The field of media studies began about eight decades ago (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011) and has produced a literature of over 10,000 published studies (Potter & Riddle, 2006). However, it appears that, after generating so many findings about its phenomena of interest, the field is still largely dominated by question-driven research, and the proportion of research that tests – or even mentions a theory – is relatively small. For example, in an analysis of articles published in eight competitive peer-reviewed journals from 1965 to 1989, Potter, Cooper, and Dupagne (1993) found that only 8.1 percent of the 1,326 articles dealing with mass communication were guided by a theory and provided a test of that theory; another 19.5 percent were tests of hypotheses, but these hypotheses were not derived from a theory. A similar pattern was found in an analysis of studies published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, when Riffe and Freitag (1997) reported that only 27.6 percent of the studies used an explicit theoretical framework and another 45.7 percent were guided by hypotheses or research questions but by no explicit theory. They found no change in these percentages over the 25-year period they examined – from 1971 to 1995. Similar findings were reported by Kamhawi and Weaver (2003), who examined all the articles published in 10 communication

journals from 1980 to 1999 and found that only 30.5 percent specifically mentioned a theory of any kind.

Narrowing the focus from all media studies to the media effects literature reveals that, while a higher percentage of effects studies feature a theory, the proportion of theory-driven research is rather low. For example, Potter and Riddle (2007) analyzed the media effects articles published in 16 journals from 1993 to 2005 and found 963 articles that examined some sort of media effect; of this total, 336 (35.0 percent) featured a theory. Bryant and Miron (2004) conducted a content analysis of the use of theory in research conducted in media effects studies and published in three mainstream media journals (*Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication*, and *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*) from 1956 to 2000. They looked for whether an article referred to a theory, which was very broadly operationalized to include references to any general explanatory mechanism, and also to general paradigms and schools of thought. Within the set of 1,806 published articles analyzed, they found that 576 (31.9 percent) made some reference to a theory. They took their analysis one step further by examining how the theory was used in the articles, and they found that over half of those articles simply referenced a theory, without testing it (passing reference, 47 percent; comparison between two or more theories, 8 percent; praise of a theory, 1 percent). About 13 percent of the studies were involved in creating a new theory (proposal = 3 percent, testing = 3 percent, support = 3 percent, expansion = 2 percent, integration = 2 percent), and 26 percent provided tests of an existing theory. Translating these percentages into the overall media effects literature, 4 percent constructed a new theory in an empirical test, 8 percent provided a test of an existing theory, 15 percent mentioned a theory but did not test or critique it, and 68 percent ignored theory altogether.

Although about two thirds of the published literature examining media effects fails to acknowledge any theory, media effects scholars have generated a vary large number of theories. Potter and Riddle (2007) identified 144 media effects theories, while Bryant and Miron (2004) found references to 604 different theories, general scientific paradigms, and schools of thought. To expand their analysis, Bryant and Miron examined the articles in every issue published from January 1, 2000 to May 1, 2004 in six journals that included the three from the first study; the group of six also contained *Communication Research*, *Mass Communication & Society*, and *Media Psychology*. In this subsequent analysis, the authors coded only for proper theories in the current sample (not schools of thought, paradigm references, and the like) and found references to 106 different theories.

While there is a large number of theories mentioned in the media effects literature, few of these theories are mentioned in more than a handful of studies and very few of them have generated a significant body of literature to test their propositions. To illustrate, the 144 theories identified by Potter and Riddle (2007) were spread out over 336 articles, the top 12 mentioned theories accounting for 50.1 percent of all the articles that mentioned a theory, while the other 132 mentioned theories were spread out across the remaining 168 published articles.

The 604 different theories, general scientific paradigms, and schools of thought identified by Bryant and Miron (2004) were from a body of 1,393 references, which meant that a theory received two mentions on average.

In summary, the scholarly field of media effects has generated a great number of theories throughout its eight decades of existence. However, only a small subset of those theories has generated more than a handful of tests. Also, the proportion of research published each year that acknowledges a theory of any kind remains at a fairly low level (around 30 percent), and most of those studies do little more than simply mention a theory; they do not test it or critique it. The positive aspect of these patterns is that the scholarly field displays a lot of creativity and has the ability to attract a wider range of scholars, conceptualizations, and methods (Anderson, 1996; Craig, 1999). This makes for an interesting churn of ideas and the freedom to ask almost any kind of question about media effects. However, the negative aspect is that the persistently low level of theory orientation, especially programmatic theory testing, makes it difficult to regard the continuing flood of research as converging toward a shared conception about how media effects are most usefully conceptualized, which effects are most important or most influential, what the relative importance of the different factors that contribute to those effects may be, and how those factors work together to exert an influence.

Most Used Theories

The second question is: What are the most often used theories in the media effects literature? Examining the findings across the three content analyses of the published literature on media effects (Byrant & Miron, 2004; Kamhawi & Weaver, 2003; Potter & Riddle, 2007), it appears that the top 10 media effects theories in terms of their prevalence of use are: agenda setting, cultivation, diffusion, feminism, framing, priming, selective exposure, social learning, third person, and uses and gratifications. Each of these 10 media effects theories is briefly profiled in this section.

Agenda setting theory was developed as an explanation of how the mass media shape public opinion (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Its central proposition states that the mainstream mass media create a public agenda by focusing attention on certain issues while ignoring others. The media have a more powerful effect in influencing the public to think about particular issues than in influencing public opinion on those issues. In the four decades since its inception, this theory has been claimed to have generated 425 empirical studies (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009), which have tested the theory along two dimensions. One dimension is the level to which the media agenda is examined, and this level ranges from a single issue to an entire set; the second dimension is the degree to which the public's perception of the agenda is examined at an individual level or at the aggregate level of public opinion. Also, much of this research has sought to explain either through framing or through priming how the media exert their influence – framing

and priming being more general media effects theories that explain effects beyond agenda setting (see below).

Cultivation theory was developed by Gerbner in the 1960s, as an explanation of how a population's constant exposure to mass media messages shaped its members' beliefs about the world. His original conceptualization (Gerbner, 1969) was a very broad macro-level view of the mass media, collectively, as a cultural institution that operated out of certain institutional values that influenced the creation of content, which in turn influenced individuals and institutions. Over time the theory's focus was narrowed to the influence of (mostly prime-time network) television content on the gradual shaping of beliefs about the real world. Its key concepts were television exposure (measured in hours per week) and cultivation indicator (measured by individuals' estimates about a variety of parameters in their everyday lives). Gerbner and his research team (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980) conducted yearly content analyses of television programming to document certain "cultural indicators," especially the rates of violence. Then they used public opinion survey data to test audience reactions and found that viewers who watched more television tended to have more consistent ("mainstreamed") views and attitudes, and they shared a more pessimistic perception of reality ("the mean world syndrome"). A recent review of the theory indicates that it has generated over 500 published studies (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2009).

Diffusion theory was first developed by Rogers (1962) in his synthesis of research findings about how ideas and innovations get disseminated throughout societies. He organized the process of dissemination into three steps. In the first step, change agents initiate some innovation and use the media to get opinion leaders to adopt the innovation. If the adopters like the innovation, they will influence people in their interpersonal networks to use it themselves, and the innovation will spread out from the original adopters to early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. The theory explains the rate of adoption through a range of factors such as the characteristics of an innovation (relative advantage, compatibility, low complexity, trialability, and observability), as well as the heterophily of the social environment. Diffusion theory has been used as an explanation of the spread of ideas beyond the stage of innovation or ideas other than innovations – for instance the spread of information from news stories (e.g., Rosengren, 1987).

Framing theory focuses on both how the media present news stories and how people make sense of the stories they find in the media. The way the media frame stories (what they highlight and what they leave out) leads people to interpret those stories in a certain way (Gitlin, 1980). Entman (1993) explains that frames define the problems, diagnose the causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies through the media's use of certain phrases, pictures, sources, and examples in a certain manner. Also, people have, in their own minds, frames that help them make sense of their experiences (Goffman, 1974). Gitlin (1980) defined frames as "principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (p. 6). Research that tests this

theory examines the selection of certain aspects of an issue, images, stereotypes, messengers, metaphors, and so on, which are used to cue specific responses.

Feminist theory presents propositions about how the media create and reinforce certain beliefs about the role of women in society (Rakow, 1986; Van Zoonen, 1994), as well as about how women use the media to create their identities and to participate in social groups (Ang, 1991; Radway, 1984). Feminist theory began as a criticism of gender stereotypes in the media, then over time it evolved to explain how audiences negotiate meaning in their interactions with media messages (Van Zoonen, 1994). Feminist criticism of the media builds on a Marxist foundation and on the belief that the media promulgate misleading images of particular groups in society – images that serve to subjugate these people by limiting their roles and expectations.

Priming theory explains how exposure to media messages exerts an immediate and short-term influence on subsequent judgments and behaviors (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Carpentier, 2009). It has its media origins in cue theory (Berkowitz, 1962), which predicted that people exposed to violence in media messages would remember certain characteristics of those messages, such that, when reminders of those characteristics would appear later in a person's real life, the lesson of the media portrayal would be triggered. This explanation grew into a cognitive activation model (Berkowitz, 1984), which explained that media messages can activate the association between certain ideas. Eventually priming was applied to the category of predictions about how people form associative networks in their mind so as to link together similar ideas and thus make sense of their world. When one idea in a network is activated, this primes the associative network that links that idea to others closely associated with it.

Selective exposure theory grew out of early sociological research on the effect of the media and attempted to explain why media messages – even when carefully planned to persuade large segments of the population – rarely exhibit widespread effects. It was reasoned that people make self-serving choices about which messages warrant their attention and that these selections are based more on reinforcement of existing beliefs than on searching for novel information that will challenge one's beliefs (Sears & Freedman, 1971). Tests of selective exposure have identified a complex set of causes, which include the availability of certain messages, how those messages contrast with their background, and characteristics of the audience (educational level, expectations, and need for information) (Schramm, 1973). The explanation for selective exposure has also relied on cognitive dissonance, which predicts that people will avoid messages that contradict their beliefs, because exposure to such messages would trigger the unpleasant cognitive state of dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

Social learning theory was developed by Bandura (1973). It stems from his research on children's learning of aggressive behavior, where he noticed that people learn behaviors simply by observing the actions of role models. That is, they do not need to perform behaviors in order to learn them; instead they can learn behavioral patterns vicariously. Over time, Bandura expanded his explanation beyond the learning of aggressive behaviors, to the observational learning of any type of

behavior depicted in media messages. He also altered the name of his theory to "social cognitive theory" (Bandura, 1986) and shifted his focus to explain that the media exert their effect through a process of triadic reciprocal causation. The three components are factors of the person (cognitive, affective, and environmental influences); established behavioral patterns; and environmental events. The fundamental assumption on which this theory rests is that people are self-developing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting instead of simple reacting organisms.

The third person effect was first documented by Davison (1983): it is the tendency of people to believe that media messages exert a stronger influence on other people than on themselves. Although it has often been regarded more as an effect or an hypothesis than a theory, it has stimulated a great deal of research and has generated many findings about the characteristics of media messages and of individuals that can explain this effect (Perloff, 2009). A meta-analysis of these findings reveals that this effect is considerably stronger than other media effects (Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne, 2000).

Uses and gratifications (U&G), while often referred to as a theory, is more of an approach to research than a theory that explains media effects. It was developed in the 1970s, in reaction to the dominant type of research at the time, which focused on how the media affected individuals. U&G focused instead on how individuals actively use the media in rational, conscious ways, to satisfy their preexisting motives and needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Early research on the theory was primarily descriptive, as researchers developed typologies of the motives and gratifications people sought out (motives) and of those they obtained (satisfaction with various media, genres, and messages) (e.g., Katz et al., 1974; Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973; McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972). Later scholars developed more explanatory propositions that were typically identified as their own theories, such as dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) and expectancy value theory (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985).

Parts of Media Effects Phenomenon

Given the patterns of theory use discussed above, it would be interesting to examine whether the use of theory is more prevalent with certain parts of the media effects phenomenon. In order to conduct such an examination, we need some sort of a map of the media effects phenomenon, to serve as the basis for plotting the position of theories. The media effects template can serve as a useful map in this task.

The media effects template

The media effects template (MET) is a two-dimensional matrix that was developed in order to profile the way theories have been used in examining the wide range of media effects (see Potter, 2009 for more detail). It is has two dimensions: type of effect on individuals and type of media influence (see Figure 6.1).

	Media influence functions			
Type of effect	Acquiring	Triggering	Altering	Conditioning
Cognitive	Memorize message element	Recall information Construct pattern	Memory structure	Strengthen skills Reinforce connections
Attitudes	Accept attitude	Recall attitude Construct new attitude Need for new attitude	Attitude change	Strengthen evaluation Reinforce attitudes
Belief	Memorize belief	Recall belief Construct belief	Belief change	Strengthen generlization
Affects	Learn emotional info	Recall emotion	Mood change	Strengthen emotions Reinforce mood
Physiology		Automatic response		Improve reactions
Behavior	Learn behaviors	Recall behavior Imitation behavior Novel behavior	Behavioral change	Reinforce habits

Figure 6.1 Examples of media effects across the media effects template. *Source:* Potter, 2009, Table 17.1.

The dimension of the type of effect

The type of effect dimension refers to the character of the experience of the effect on an individual. This analytical dimension is composed of six categories: cognitive, attitudinal, belief, affective, physiological, and behavioral effects.

A cognitive media effect is conceptualized as media exposure exercising an influence on an individual's mental processes or on the product of those mental processes. An attitudinal effect focuses on the way individuals make evaluative judgments about objects. Beliefs are conceptualized as judgments about the probability of something existing or occurring. The key difference between an attitude and a belief is that an attitude is clearly an evaluation, thus it is the comparison of something against a standard, and the variation on a measurement of an attitude is in terms of valence – strongly negative through neutral and toward strongly positive. In contrast, a belief is a construction about the probability that an object or event is associated with a given attribute (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). An affective effect is conceptualized as the feelings that people experience and may or may not concern a particular object or event (Albarracin, Zanna, Johnson, & Kumkale, 2005; Berkowitz, 2000). Writing about the structure of affect, Schimmack and Crites (2005) argue that there are three types of affective experiences: emotions, moods, and sensory reactions. Like attitudes, affect has valence (i.e., it is positive and negative) and intensity. But unlike attitudes, the characteristics of frequency and duration are also important with affects.

A physiological effect is an automatic bodily response. Physiological reactions are typically hard-wired into the human brain. Some of them remain outside conscious control (such as pupil dilation), so that the human body can ensure its survival and make essential functions automatic. Other physiological reactions, while

automatically triggered, come under the control of the conscious mind (such as when one engages in deep-breathing exercises to slow down one's heart rate). A behavioral effect is typically defined as an overt action of an individual (Albarracin et al., 2005). These actions can be observed by others (turning the television off, buying a product, hitting someone, etc.).

The dimension of media-influenced functions

The second analytical dimension of the media effects template relates to the ways in which the media influence individuals. It has four components: acquiring, triggering, altering, and conditioning. The first two are immediate effects that would show up either during a media exposure or shortly after, while the latter two are longer-term effects that are attributable to many media exposures over time.

The acquiring function refers to people adding something to an existing set (for example, to existing knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, behavioral patterns). During media exposure a person could acquire a fact, an image, a melody, an attitude, a belief, affective information, or a behavioral sequence. These are things that are simply accepted from the media; they require no alteration or cognitive construction. The acquiring function shows up in all types of effects, except in the physiological type: media messages have no power to *create* a physiological element in an individual.

The triggering function refers to a media message eliciting some sort of response in the individual during exposure to it. A media message could activate the recall of previously learned information, of an existing attitude, or of an existing belief. A media message could also trigger an emotion, a physiological reaction, or a previously learned behavioral sequence. It could also trigger the beginning of a complex process. For example, when people read some news coverage about a political candidate whom they have never heard about before, they have no existing attitude about that candidate. During exposure to this news coverage, people can take the information from the news story and begin a process of filtering out some message elements as not meeting their standard of credibility, then filtering in the remaining informational elements and using them in an inductive process, to perceive a pattern. Therefore a media message can trigger simply the memorization of several facts or a more complex mental process of reasoning.

The altering function refers to the media gradually changing something in the person over the long term. The increments of change are so slight during each exposure that they cannot be recognized in the short term; however, over a long period of media exposure, the cumulative effect is more clearly evidenced. The change can be a decrement (e.g., a gradual loss in the intensity of emotional reactions to horror films over time) or an increase (e.g., the continual rewarding of viewers' exposure to a particular program increases their habitual viewing of that program over time).

Like the altering function, the conditioning function refers to the influence of repeated exposure to the media over the long term; but, unlike the altering function, conditioning refers to non-change in level of effect. With conditioning, the person's existing knowledge structures, attitudes, and beliefs become more fixed and weighty, a result that makes them harder to change. For example, a steady

stream of a particular kind of media message can contribute greater and greater weight to a person's attitude about a political issue, thus making it much more difficult over time to convert that attitude into a different one.

Patterns of theory usage

The data reported in this section come from an expansion of Potter and Riddle's (2007) study, which was an analysis of the articles published in all the issues of eight mainstream media journals in the odd years from 1995 to 2005; the expansion added an analysis of those journals for 2007 and 2009, so that 64 journal/years were included in the study. Within each issue all articles were coded for whether they met the criterion of examining a media effect on individuals. Typically the mass medium's content was the independent variable and the effect was the dependent variable. When the article (n = 574) was used as a basis, 234 (40.8 percent) articles were motivated by theory. When the effect itself (n = 689) was used as a basis, 273 (39.6 percent) of effects were found to be motivated by a theory.

Is the examination of certain types of effects more likely to be motivated by theory? The answer appears to be yes (see Table 6.1). The belief is type of effect that was most strongly motivated by theory (60.5 percent). This is due largely to the theories of cultivation, agenda setting, and third person, which all focus on the media's influence on changing, then reinforcing a person's beliefs about the real world, issue importance, and the vulnerability of others.

Are studies focusing on certain types of media-influenced functions more likely to be motivated by theory? Again, the answer appears to be yes, although the differences here are not as dramatic as they are across types of effects. The functions of altering and reinforcing exhibit a higher proportion of theory motivation than those of triggering and especially acquiring.

When we look at the distribution of articles motivated by theories across the two dimensions in the MET, some interesting patterns emerge (see Table 6.2). Physiological effects are examined exclusively as a triggering influence – in other words, as effects triggered by the media; and cognitive-type effects are almost exclusively examined as an acquiring influence – that is, as if in this area the media stimulate acquisition. Belief effects are almost always examined as an altering function, while both the attitudinal effects and the behavior effects are dominated by the triggering and altering functions.

Implications

The fourth and final question is: What are the implications of current practices in the use of theory, especially in relation to the development of scholarship about media effects? To answer this question, I will first highlight the major patterns in the use of theory throughout this very large literature of media effects. Then I will offer some recommendations.

Table 6.1 Use of theory by type of effect and media influence role.

Type of effect	*No theory*	*Theory*	*Total*	*Percent using theory*
Cognitive	97	55	152	36.2%
Attitudes	93	61	154	39.6%
Belief	49	75	124	60.5%
Affects	36	21	57	36.8%
Physiology	11	1	12	8.3%
Behavior	130	60	190	31.6%
	416	273	689	
	(60.4%)	(39.6%)		

Media function	*No theory*	*Theory*	*Total Percent using theory*
Acquiring	50	22	72	30.6%
Triggering	147	81	22	835.5%
Altering	194	154	348	44.3%
Reinforcing	20	16	36	44.4%
	411	273	684	
	(60.1%)	(39.9%)		

Type of effect	*Acquiring*	*Triggering*	*Altering*	*Conditioning*	
Cognitive	69	42	42	0	153 (22.0%)
Attitudes	2	66	79	9	156 (22.4%)
Belief	1	3	107	15	126 (18.1%)
Affects	0	43	15	0	58 (8.3%)
Physiology	0	12	0	0	12 (1.7%)
Behavior	0	74	105	12	191 (27.4%)
	72	240	348	36	696
	(10.3%)	(34.5%)	(50.0%)	(5.2%)	

The current literature

Now, in the early twenty-first century, the published research literature that examines any aspect of the mass media has grown to a very large size. While it is a positive characteristic of a scholarly field that it has generated a large literature, this literature appears to be highly fragmented, which is a negative characteristic (Berger, 1991; Hardt, 1992; Jensen & Rosengren, 1990; Pietila, 1994; Power, Kubey, & Kiousis, 2002). This literature continues to be plagued by a small proportion of literature in theory-driven research, by little programmatic research and synthesis across studies, and by definitional confusion.

Many studies

It has been estimated that the mass media literature has grown to about 10,000 published studies in scholarly journals and that, from that total, about 6,200 studies deal with mass media *effects* (Potter & Riddle, 2006). This should be

Table 6.2 General patterns of media effects on individuals: by type of effect and media-influenced function.

	Media influence functions				
Type of effect	*Acquiring*	*Triggering*	*Altering*	*Conditioning*	
Cognitive	69	42	42	0	153 (22.0%)
Attitudes	2	66	79	9	156 (22.4%)
Belief	1	3	107	15	126 (18.1%)
Affects	0	43	15	0	58 (8.3%)
Physiology	0	12	0	0	12 (1.7%)
Behavior	0	74	105	12	191 (27.4%)
	72 (10.3%)	240 (34.5%)	348 (50.0%)	36 (5.2%)	696

regarded as a very conservative estimate, if we consider that scholarship is published in other communication journals as well as in journals from contiguous fields like psychology, sociology, political science, education, and marketing. There is also a considerable amount of media scholarship published in books, and another large body of work that is presented at professional conferences and not published in books or journals. Even this very conservative number of scholarly pieces is huge when we consider the amount of effort required to design, conduct, and publish a single study. This is powerful evidence that the phenomenon of the mass media has been of great interest to a great many researchers.

Little theory-driven research

Studies that examine the published research literature have consistently found that the largest part (60 percent to 70 percent) of the literature ignores theory altogether and that most of the studies that do acknowledge a theory only mention it in passing. The field of media effects continues to be highly exploratory, and there is no evidence that it is evolving out of that stage.

When a scholarly field is new, it is understandable why it is driven by questions rather than by theories: there are many more questions than there are theories. However, now that scholars have developed more than 600 media effects theories over the past eight decades of research, a sizable proportion of the literature continues to ignore these theories. Scholars who have examined this body of work have frequently observed that the use of theory is at a low level; there needs to be a more explicit use of theory both in the generation of empirical research studies and in the interpretation of results (Shoemaker & Reese, 1990; Stevenson, 1992). Also, in their survey of major scholars in the field of mass communication, So and Chan (1991) reported that 63 percent of respondents thought the theoretical development should be a lot better. Yet it appears that, despite these criticisms, the proportion of studies that even mention a theory in this growing literature has remained at the same level for the past several decades.

Many theories

It is ironic that, with so little theory-driven research, we still have a very large number of theories in the mass media literature. A few of these theories are widely known; others are relatively unknown, either because they are new or because they have yet to be discovered by many scholars. Some are formal systems of explanations that have generated many hypothetic–deductive tests, while others have been generated from an inductive process in a single study. Some have been constructed by social scientists working in media studies or related fields (such as psychology, sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, business, or education), while others have been created by humanistic scholars (in fields such as film studies, comparative literature, linguistics, feminist studies, ethnic studies, and art). Some of these explanations display the term "theory" in their titles, while others are referred to as models, hypotheses, or effects. Of course, I am using a broad conception of theory. I have been willing to include on my list any systematic explanation based on ideas (concepts and constructions) that seek to organize, predict, or explain some aspect of the mass media phenomenon.

This points to a pattern of thin theory development, that is, there are few theories that are introduced in a theoretical piece and then show up in multiple tests, where they are shaped and refined. For example, in our study of mass media effects literature (Potter & Riddle, 2007), we found 144 theories in those published studies, but only 12 of these theories were mentioned in 5 or more studies in our sample of 936 published research articles. The remaining 132 theories were spread out over 168 articles. Bryant and Miron (2004) identified 1,393 references to 604 different theories, which comes down to an average of just over two references per theory. Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) found that only three theories were mentioned in as many as 10 percent of their analyzed articles. These patterns led them to say that

> theoretical development is probably the main consideration in evaluating the disciplinary status of the field. As our field grows in scope and complexity, the pressure for theoretical integration increases. It seems that scholars in the field should be developing and testing theories to explain the process and effects of mass communication. (Kamhawi & Weaver, 2003, p. 20)

Little programmatic research

In *Milestones in Mass Communication Research*, Lowery and DeFleur (1988) argue that the "study of mass communication has been particularly unsystematic." They elaborate upon this point by saying that scholars "almost never coordinated their efforts or built upon the results of previous research." They claim that many of the questions guiding the research "were not theoretically significant" (p. 3). This condition persists today. Scholars who publish many studies will typically do a study or two on one topic then move on to another, publish a few studies on the new topic, then move on again to another. Few scholars identify themselves with a particular theory or programmatic line of research or are defined by it.

This seems to be a very serious shortcoming of the literature. Theory testing and the replication of findings are so important for the development of knowledge because these practices serve to guide scholars away from conceptualizations, practices, and findings that are faulty and in directions that are most useful for explaining the phenomena.

Little synthesis

Perhaps the relatively low use of theory would not be such a serious shortcoming if there were continuous efforts to synthesize findings across individual studies within components of the literature in the form of critical reviews. However, critical reviews of the media effects literature are relatively rare, and the examples that are undertaken deal with ever-smaller slivers of the literature. In our recent content analysis of the mass media effects literature (Potter & Riddle, 2006), among the 936 articles we examined, we found only 47 that could remotely be regarded as synthesis pieces. Most of these (n = 36) were standalone narrative reviews, many of which were fairly descriptive and did not ascend to the standard of synthesis. The other 11 published articles were meta-analyses that provided the beginning steps of synthesis but often did not complete the synthesis task.

By synthesis I mean that one analyzes critically the literature on a topic in order to reject faulty findings and to highlight the more credible findings, then organize those more credible findings into meaningful categories, which are calibrated by importance. The synthesizer assembles the calibrated findings into a structure such as an outline, a model, or a graphic, which presents a fresh construction that illuminates the structure of the findings as a mapping device – in this case an explanation of "the how" or "the why" of some aspect of the mass media phenomenon. This is the essence of building substantial structures for knowledge about the field's focal phenomenon.

As the mass media literature grows, it is crucial that careful syntheses be undertaken. Without this kind of work, all findings – faulty and valid – will be regarded as equally important. The literature stays fragmented and fairly descriptive. There is little building of more probing insights into the nature of our phenomenon – building that is achieved in the synergies of juxtaposing various findings in a system of explanation. Until we are able to organize our literatures into a unified system through synthesis, we will have to labor in a field with scattered findings, thus making it very difficult for ourselves to choose the most important areas to work on and to access the full set of best thinking when conducting a literature review.

Definitional variation

If this scholarly field were characterized by a few theories that served as a foundation for a large proportion of the literature, then it would be likely that the conceptualizations for the key variables would be widely shared. However, given the characteristics of the media literature, there is a danger of great variation in definitions. I found this to be the case with the phrase "media violence" in the published literature (see Potter, 1999). Some of these definitions included verbal acts, while

most did not; some included accidents, while others required intentional acts; some had to be depicted on the screen, while others could be implied. It is likely that many other commonly used terms – such as audience, message, child – also exhibit a wide variety of meanings across studies.

Another example of definitional confounding is with the term "flow." Raymond Williams (1974) used it to refer to how people experience a sequence of messages in a medium like television. He explained that television programs do not exist as discrete entities in the minds of viewers. Rather a kind of flow across texts is the central experience of the medium (p. 95) – a fact that accounts for much of television's critical significance. This is when the audience member continues an exposure while one message replaces another or a message is interrupted by other messages. Thus, to Williams, "flow" is an endless random juxtaposition of different texts. Newcombe and Hirsch (1984) picked up on this idea but referred to the elements as "viewing strips." In contrast, Csikszentmihalyi (1988) uses the term "flow" to refer to a psychological state of being swept away by a task where the person loses the sense of time and place in the pursuit of a highly engrossing goal. Other scholars refer to the same idea but use a different term: "transportation" (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2006; Green & Brock, 2000). These are, all, important scholars dealing with very interesting ideas; however, the definitional confounding substantially increases the costs to readers and serves to slow down the sharing of meaning.

Recommendation

This chapter builds to an obvious need and toward a recommendation correlated to it: researchers should generate more tests of the many media effects theories already in existence. This would help shift the focus of the field from information to knowledge. Studies that are generated by a question and provide a descriptive answer to that question contribute information to the field; in fact this kind of information forms an essential basis for any scholarly field. But there also need to be efforts to sort through all the information in order to determine which findings are faulty and which provide the most promising avenues toward generating substantial insights into the nature of media effects. This task is accomplished through theory construction and theory testing. Unless we can shift more effort toward theories, we run the risk of being overwhelmed by a flood of findings.

As the size of the literature grows larger in a scholarly field, it becomes more difficult for scholars to see the big picture that the field is developing. In the early years of the development of this research field, scholars could read periodic reviews that were able to deal with all the literature in the field. That is, until the mid-1980s, media effects scholars could read a chapter-length review to perceive the big picture of media effects (Hovland, 1954; McLeod & Reeves, 1980; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Weiss, 1969). But now, given the vast size of the media effects literature, reviews have grown into full-size books where many different scholars review just one subtopic. Current examples of such reviews are *Media Effects: Advances*

in Theory and Research (third edition) (Bryant & Oliver, 2009), which contains reviews across 27 topics; *Media Processes and Effects* (Nabi & Oliver, 2009), with 37 chapters reviewing various subareas of media effects; and *21st Century Communication: A Reference Handbook* (Volume 2) (Eadie, 2009), which presents 44 chapters reviewing various subareas of media effects. While each of these 108 chapters presents a good review of an important area within the overall field of media effects, there is something missing at a more general level – that is, a sort of über-review that can look for patterns across theories and across the many subareas of the fragmented literature. For example, it would be useful to sort through all the factors of influence identified across all the media effects sub-literatures to determine which of these factors exerts the widest influence across the entire range of effects. It would be useful to calibrate relative influence across those factors, in order to identify the ones that should be included most centrally into explanatory mechanisms. And it would be useful to compare and contrast the explanatory systems across the most popular media effects theories in order to determine whether they are essentially the same (in which case there is considerable duplication of effort) and to determine where the explanatory gaps are.

By making this recommendation, I am not arguing for a cessation of exploratory research or that media effects scholars should abandon question-driven research. We do need the creativity of generating new concepts, new definitions for old concepts, as well as new approaches to measurement, design, and analyses. However, we also need much more of what we have undervalued in our development to this point: more acknowledging of the conceptualizations and approaches of previous scholars, as well as more of a critical analysis of the findings we have produced, so that we may orient our future efforts more efficiently into the more promising avenues of explanation.

Conclusion

Scholarly fields develop most effectively when there is a balance between two drives. One drive is oriented toward generating additional empirical findings about the field's focal phenomena. This provides the essential information base for a field. The other drive is to transform the individual bits of information into knowledge, which requires sorting through the findings of individual studies with the help of critical analyses, then synthesizing more general structures, such as conceptualizations for key ideas and explanatory propositions that articulate relationships among those key ideas. This second drive produces theory and a more comprehensive context for understanding theory.

The patterns illuminated in this chapter indicate that mass media effects scholars are very much driven in the former direction and hence have produced a very large and growing literature. However, it seems that a lack of drive of the second kind has limited the field, preventing it from developing a correspondingly substantial knowledge structure about its phenomena.

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7

Cultivation Theory
Its History, Current Status, and Future Directions

Daniel Romer, Patrick Jamieson, Amy Bleakley, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson

Fearful people are more dependent, more easily manipulated and controlled, more susceptible to deceptively simple, strong, tough measures and hard-line postures – both political and religious. They may accept and even welcome repression if it promises to relieve their insecurities. That is the deeper problem of violence-laden television.

Gerbner, 1981

Cultivation theory was developed by George Gerbner (1919–2005), Larry Gross, and their colleagues beginning in the late 1960s at the Annenberg School of Communication (ASC) of the University of Pennsylvania. It rested on the recognition that industrialized mass-mediated storytelling, most clearly exemplified by television (TV) programming, had become the dominant entertainment medium in American culture. The theory proposed that along with this dominance came content heavily laden with violence that provided a distorted view of the world. In addition, this content often portrayed women, the elderly, and racial minorities as victims of violence and white males as enforcers. The theory proposed that heavy viewing of this kind of content "cultivated" a fearful attitude to the world, which had gradual but serious long-term negative consequences for its viewers' outlook and beliefs as well as for the larger culture. The theory was popular. A study of three major communication research journals covering the period 1956–2000 found that cultivation theory was among the three most heavily cited communication theories, along with uses and gratification and agenda setting (Bryant & Miron, 2004). This chapter briefly describes cultivation theory, the ways it has been challenged, and how its role can be understood and further evaluated in our rapidly changing media environment. It also contrasts the theory with Bandura's social cognitive learning approach to the influence of the mass media.

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Background of Cultivation Theory

Gerbner experienced the oppressive power of authoritarian government and war. He emigrated from Hungary to America during the turbulent Nazi era and later earned a bronze star for his service in fighting for the US in World War II. He wrote that TV, a technology motivated by profit, had become the primary storyteller in people's lives and in that role had surpassed oral tradition – and even religion – as the transmitter of cultural values. Gerbner emphasized the importance of TV because he believed that storytelling is an essential process, which allows humans to understand themselves and the world. He commented that in this new TV age people watched TV before they even learned to talk (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Later, he would develop cultivation theory, explaining heavy TV viewing as a major repressive influence in the maintenance of unequal power in society.

Gerbner founded the Cultural Indicators project (CIP) at ASC in the late 1960s to content-analyze and assess the impact of television violence on an audience's perceptions and attitudes. The project became a foundation for the development of cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1969). It had two major goals: to content-analyze message systems so as to quantify what viewers saw; and to use cultivation analyses in evaluating the consequences of growing up, living with, and learning from an environment dominated by TV content (Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995). From 1969 to 1995, the CIP would capture and analyze over 3,000 programs and 35,000 characters of prime-time and weekend daytime TV.

Gerbner argued that media reinforced rather than challenged societal power structures and that in TV's new role as the primary storyteller, analysis of TV content could serve as a "cultural indicator" for understanding the messages that shaped our conception of reality (Gross, 2012). He used the CIP to show that TV content distorted reality, that its storytelling was repetitive, and the violence was common. For example, unlike actual crime trends in the US, most of the portrayed crime involved violence between strangers. Gerbner and colleagues also documented vast inequality in TV content in that male characters outnumbered female characters by 3 to 1 and older characters and nonwhites were greatly underrepresented. They argued that repeated viewing of this content hindered the empowerment of women, the elderly, and members of other less powerful groups, all of whom were on average much more likely to be portrayed as victims of violence.

Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli (1980a) analyzed ten years of CIP data and found that crime was ten times more frequent on prime-time TV "than in reality"; they counted five acts of violence in an average prime-time hour and 18 acts per hour of daytime children's weekend programs. They also found that the consequences of violence – pain and suffering – were rarely shown on TV; for instance only about 7 percent of TV characters required medical treatment. Gerbner's research raised concerns about the amount and types of violence shown on TV, and the US Congress held hearings about those concerns. As a result, the TV industry and other groups conducted studies that also confirmed the high

rates of violence on TV and in the genres most likely to display it (e.g., National Television Violence Study, 1997). These findings supported the central thesis of cultivation theory – that heavy viewing of TV would expose content that distorted reality, promoted fear, and gradually cultivated a social construction that disempowered audiences.

Cultivation theory's thesis that TV reinforced unequal power in society is illustrated by how one of society's most marginalized groups, that of mental illness sufferers, has been portrayed. Gerbner and his team wrote that in prime-time TV, 40 percent of "normal" characters were violent but 73 percent of mentally ill characters were violent. In addition, only 44 percent of "normal characters" but 81 percent of mentally ill characters were victims of violence (Gerbner Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1981c). Signorielli (1989) extended this analysis by using a CIP sample from 1969–1985. She found that, while only 3 percent of prime-time TV characters were mentally ill, they were the most likely characters to commit violence and be victimized. Cultivation theory explained that stereotyping characters with mental illness as violent and disproportionately portraying them as victims of violence would gradually influence heavy viewers' hostile or unfair beliefs and attitudes toward those burdened by mental illness.

Gerbner (1998) argued that experiments linking portrayed media violence with short-term effects on violent behavior only captured a relatively small part of TV's problematic influence. Rather than focusing on short-term media effects, cultivation theory proposed that consistently heavy long-term TV viewers, when compared with light viewers, perceived the world as more closely resembling TV than reality (Gerbner, 1998). Hence the central thesis of Gerbner's cultivation theory was not that TV violence promotes violence in society; rather, the dominance of TV and its frequent portrayal of violence perpetuates, in heavy viewers, a fear that benefits the power of those in authority, acts as a means of social control, and maintains the status quo and hence unequal power in society (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980). Therefore cultivation is not a short-term effect measurable through an "effects theory" of behavior, but rather a long and gradual transformation of the viewers' general outlook and beliefs – and one that does not lend itself to experimental verification.

Gerbner argued that heavier TV viewing, which included almost unavoidable violent content, would lead to the cultivation of the audience's perception of a "mean world." Gerbner and colleagues (1980a) used survey results to support the prediction that heavy versus light TV viewing was associated with distorted beliefs that the world was a mean and dangerous place. In this world one could not trust people, a belief that left one prey to great apprehension and insecurity (Gerbner, 1981). Gerbner argued that inequalities of power meant that groups would be affected differently: "[T]he most vulnerable to the 'mean world' syndrome are women, older people, those with lower education and income, those who do not read newspapers regularly, and those who live in large cities" (Gerbner, 1981, p. 6). In other words, the least powerful in society were the ones most likely to be influenced by the power of the cultivation effect.

Challenges to the Theory

Cultivation theory stimulated considerable research, some of which challenged its predictions. In response to the critiques, Gerbner and colleagues elaborated cultivation theory by introducing the concepts of "mainstreaming" and "resonance." Mainstreaming referred to the frequent finding that ceiling effects in respondents' beliefs left little room for cultivation to emerge, with the result that it was often the more educated that showed effects of TV viewing rather than the dispossessed or the more conservative viewers. Thus the convergence of outlooks among heavier TV viewers was said to exhibit a move toward the mainstream, while lighter viewers had more divergent outlooks. Resonance occurred when TV portrayal was congruent with viewers' everyday experiences or perceived reality, which could lead to receiving a "double dose" of the same message. This would be expected to reinforce cultivation, even if it could not always be observed in cross-sectional surveys (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980b).

We provide a brief overview of these early critiques and of how Gerbner and colleagues responded to them. Doob and MacDonald (1979), for example, found that increased fear of crime was no longer attributable to TV viewing when neighborhood crime was controlled. In response, Gerbner and his colleagues argued that a cultivation effect could be found in cities, which are places where you would expect more crime (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1981a), but it also had its impact through its ability to resonate with the environment. Thus a cultivation effect could be found in the Doob and McDonald study, but it was primarily evident among viewers living in more crime-ridden areas of the viewing region.

More criticism followed when both Hirsch (1980, 1981) and Hughes (1980) reanalyzed nationally representative survey data from the National Opinion Research Council's General Social Survey (GSS) that Gerbner and his colleagues had analyzed in support of the theory. Hirsch criticized cultivation theory on many points. Using GSS data, he argued that cultivation findings disappeared when nonviewers (about 4 percent of the sample) were compared with light viewers and when extreme viewers (about 4 percent) were compared with heavy viewers. Hirsch argued there was no linear dose response in the effects of TV viewing because light viewers showed more cultivation than nonviewers, while heavy viewers showed more than extreme viewers. Gerbner and team (1981a) responded that cultivation was found for over 90 percent of the data, not including the nonviewers and extreme viewers, and those nonviewers were small in number and not critical for testing cultivation. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1981b) further replied that the "vast majority of (analyzed survey) items" did not deviate statistically from linearity across Hirsch's categories of hours of TV viewing, and that mainstreaming in sub-populations of viewers explained the lack of "main effects" of cultivation.

Hughes as well as Hirsch argued that, when controls for common demographic differences such as age, gender, race, and income were put into the analysis, cultivation

effects were no longer found in the GSS data. Thus they argued that these preexisting sociological differences rather than TV viewing were related to "mean world" perceptions. Gerbner and his colleagues (1981a) responded that, among those with "some college education," cultivation could be found with all the aforementioned controls in place and that mainstreaming and resonance within sub-populations explained the absence of cultivation differences (see also Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, for a discussion of these issues).

Criticism from Hughes and Hirsch may have helped to further define cultivation theory. Gerbner and his colleagues (1980b) wrote that TV "may exert powerful yet subtle influences which our instruments cannot detect" and that they also expected any observable effects from cultivation to be "relatively small." They responded to Hirsch's attacks by calling for more investigation into mainstreaming and resonance processes that might obscure the effects of cultivation (Gerbner et al., 1981a). They argued that Hughes's work did not "disconfirm" cultivation because of the small number of variables analyzed and lack of analysis of audience subgroups (Gerbner et al., 1980b). They also argued that, although cultivation differences were statistically modest in size, they were important and far-reaching in the culture (Gerbner, 1998).

The feud over cultivation's validity and importance, and over whether there was enough evidence to support it continued into the 1980s. As the years passed, however, the theory continued to stimulate interest. Morgan and Shanahan (2010) report that their most recent count of studies related to cultivation exceeds 500. Although a common cultivation perspective unites these studies, they vary enormously in the choice of an outcome of interest (e.g., crime, sex roles, cognitive processes) as well as in the type of methodology employed (e.g., surveys, experiments). In some cases researchers tested implications that were never part of the original conception of the theory, such as beliefs about health (e.g., Lee & Niederdeppe, 2011), marriage (e.g., Segrin & Nabi, 2002), and peer sexual behavior (Chia & Gunther, 2006). In the next section we review meta-analyses that have been conducted to assess the predictions of the theory.

Meta-Analyses of Cultivation Effects

While message-based content analyses are an important part of cultivation analysis, this section focuses on studies that aimed to elucidate "how exposure to the world of television contributes to viewers' conceptions about the real world" (Morgan, 2009, p. 70), which admittedly is only one part of the research strategy originally conceived by Gerbner. Generally these studies focus on individual-level "effects" of different amounts of self-reported television exposure on beliefs about and perceptions of social reality. Note that this was not what Gerbner originally had in mind:

> Early on, Gerbner maintained that the 'effects' of communication are not to be found in short-term attitude or behavior change, but in the history and dynamics of the

> reciprocal relationships between the structure of the institutions which produce media messages, the message systems themselves, and the image structures which are embedded within a culture. (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, p. 7)

It appears therefore that tests of these early tenets of cultivation, namely that long-term exposure to TV's pervasive themes and patterns, regardless of genre, would influence viewers' beliefs and attitudes about power relations in society, were reduced to studies of the relation between hours of TV exposure and beliefs about social reality.

There are generally two types of items used to measure the effects of cultivation. We use crime and violence as examples to illustrate the measures used because most of the early formative work on cultivation was on violence. The first type is represented by measures that ask the respondent to report on what Hawkins and Pingree (1982) described as the "demographics of television content" – the "statistical facts" of the television world (Morgan, 2009; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999) – for example: "Does most fatal violence occur between strangers or between relatives or acquaintances?" When respondents say "Strangers," they are giving the "television answer," because this is more in line with what is seen on television than with what arrest records indicate. Another type of measure often used asks respondents to give an estimate about some aspect of reality that is relevant to their own life situation (Morgan, 2009; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999); for example, "How many murders take place in [place of residence] every year?" (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001). These neighborhood measures are much less easy to compare to objective statistics in the absence of data about neighborhood differences in crime. The other major type of measure involves more subjective or "semi-projective" reactions to potential exposure to crime in one's neighborhood, for instance fear of walking alone at night, or lack of trust in others. All of these measures have been used to test the "mean world" syndrome that Gerbner described in his early publications (Heath & Petraitis, 1987). In their review, Hawkins and Pingree (1982) referred to such items as "value-based" measures that aim "to measure some aspect of the underlying value system of television content" (p. 233).

Evidence for Cultivation Effects

The nature of the questions posed by cultivation theory about the relationships between television viewing and a variety of outcomes is best suited to survey research. While there have been experiments that tested cultivation effects (e.g., Bryant, Carveth, & Brown, 1981; Wakshlag, Viol, & Tamborini, 1983), hypothesized long-term effects of television exposure have typically been explored through surveys, both longitudinal and cross-sectional. For this reason, the meta-analysis findings described below only include surveys. However, the vast majority were cross-sectional in design and thus can only provide associations rather than prospective predictions.

In 1997 Morgan and Shanahan published a meta-analysis that included 300 publications from as early as 1976. After exclusions, their final analysis was based on 52 independent samples (which were not necessarily from separate studies) from survey-based studies. Findings used to compute the overall meta-analytic statistics satisfied the following three criteria: the correlations were based on an entire set of data, as opposed to being derived from specific subgroups (although subgroup moderator analyses were conducted); the outcomes were related to violence, sex roles, and political orientations; and the correlations were measured as Pearson *r*s, or as gammas that were later transformed into *r*s (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). The dependent variables, across the different topic areas, were those that could be considered to have a "television answer," although an objective criterion was unlikely for many of the measures. The authors reported an average overall effect size of $r = 0.091$ ($K = 52$), with correlations varying only slightly across the dependent variables: $r = 0.077$ for political beliefs ($K = 27$); $r = 0.102$ for sex role studies ($K = 14$); and $r = 0.103$ for violence ($K = 32$). There was also evidence of a large proportion of variation (61 percent) in study outcomes attributable to moderators (rather than to sampling error). However, Morgan and Shanahan were unable to identify moderators by using demographic variables such as gender, education level, age, and study characteristics (e.g., how exposure was measured). It thus appeared that the relation between TV exposure and beliefs about social reality was heavily dependent on characteristics that were unmeasured in the meta-analysis.

One of the moderator analyses examined effect sizes in studies conducted by or associated with the original group of cultivation researchers (i.e., Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli) by comparison to effect sizes in studies conducted by other researchers. This was done in order to address a recurring concern that many cultivation studies were carried out by this core group, or by researchers who worked with members of the original team (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Studies involving the core group had an effect size of $r = 0.088$ ($K = 31$), while studies conducted by researchers outside of the core group had an average effect of $r = 0.100$ ($K = 21$). Thus there was no evidence that study findings depended on the affiliation of the study team.

Two years later, in their book *Television and Its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research*, Shanahan and Morgan (1999) expanded on their prior meta-analysis by including six more samples; thus they created a total of 58 independent samples. The 98 publications from which the samples were drawn (see Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, Table 6.1, pp. 116–120) included 12 international samples in which over one third of the studies involved children or adolescents. The effect sizes in the new samples were consistent with those found in the earlier analysis ($r = 0.10$ overall, and a weighted average of $r = 0.085$ for larger samples). The moderator analyses were repeated, but, once again, none was able to detect any differences. The authors contended that, although they had not found moderator effects, some patterns emerged that supported the argument for mainstreaming, especially with regard to political ideology. Political liberals who were heavy viewers were more

likely to have opinions that were rather similar to conservative opinions. It may be that liberals were more influenced by television viewing because

> conservatives are 'already close' to the views promulgated by social elites … liberals, on the other hand, when they encounter television, apparently encounter a world whose messages and morals differ drastically from what they might naturally perceive in a world without TV. (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, p. 152)

These data indicated that the more the groups deviated from the "conservative social mainstream," the more susceptible they were to television messages (p. 154).

Political ideology was not the only factor that affected cultivation differences. Whites, those with a college education, and those with a higher income demonstrated higher cultivation effects. On the other hand, the effect size among older persons was lower than in younger persons. The authors theorized that, since older respondents had not grown up with television, it exerted less influence on them (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Nevertheless, all these findings are consistent with the mainstreaming explanation proposed by Gerbner and his colleagues for differences in effects by subgroups, according to which more socially and politically conservative subgroups show less evidence of cultivation.

The meta-analyses demonstrated that there is a small and consistent cultivation effect of cumulative television exposure on perceptions about the world that are reflective of the dominant themes and patterns on television. As summarized below, Morgan and Shanahan (1997, pp. 33–34) argue that the small effect size is still meaningful and is consistent with the nature of television.

> The forces that shape our beliefs are many and varied; television is just one. As Gerbner et al. have repeatedly argued over the years, television is by no means the most powerful influence on people, but it is the most common, the most pervasive, the most widely shared. Gerbner et al. have also argued that the *size* of an effect is less important than its *direction* and the nature of its steady contribution (see Gerbner et al., 1994 [= Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994]). They have pointed out that "small effects" make the difference in a tight struggle.

Since the publication of these meta-analyses, a narrative review by Morgan and Shanahan (2010) discusses some of the more recent developments in cultivation research and highlights some of the studies conducted in the past decade. We will discuss some of these developments in the context of common criticisms of the theory and related research.

More Recent Tests of Cultivation Theory

While criticisms of cultivation theory have mounted over the years, considerable research has attempted to assess these criticisms. In an attempt to study cultivation in an experimental context (described below), Williams (2006) grouped criticism of cultivation theory into several categories, some of which we review here.

Failure to consider content differences in TV

At the center of cultivation theory is the premise that long-term, cumulative exposure to television results in worldviews that are in line with what is seen and heard on television. Despite variations in content, the theory maintains that there are distinct commonalities across all programs that are responsible for cultivating the beliefs projected by TV. Thus any cultivation effects, and the distinction often made between "light" and "heavy" viewers, only take into account the amount of time spent watching TV. In short, "cultivation does not deny the fact that some programs may contain some messages more than others, or that messages themselves may change somewhat over time. But these variations are seen as "drops," while cultivation is concerned with "the bucket" (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, p. 28; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 72).

When cultivation was originally developed in the 1970s, the assumption that TV content is homogeneous may have been plausible, given the limited number of channels and the narrow scope of the programming. The media landscape has changed quite dramatically since that time, however, and there is enormous variation in what people can choose to watch, even within specific genres. Reality television, for example, ranges from home-improvement shows to talent competitions to documentary-style shows that showcase the lives of the rich and famous. As communication research has evolved since the inception of cultivation theory, there is growing interest in content differences. Numerous studies on exposure to different types of television content – violence (Huesmann & Taylor, 2006), sex (Collins et al., 2004), and alcohol (Engels, Hermans, van Baaren, Hollenstein, & Bot, 2009), for example – demonstrate the utility of a content-specific approach. Rubin, Perse, and Taylor (1988) provided an early demonstration of the importance of different genres of television content on such attitudes as faith in others, personal safety, and political efficacy.

One important distinction in TV content is between news and other forms of content. Although Gerbner focused on fiction in his analysis of TV content, it is plausible that news programming, especially at the local level, can cultivate beliefs about the state of the world. Several studies have focused on TV news coverage in the context of cultivation (Gross & Aday, 2003; Lee & Niederdeppe, 2011; Niederdeppe, Fowler, Goldstein, & Pribble, 2010; Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003). Romer and colleagues (2003) noted that a significant proportion of local news programming in the US was devoted to crime and that this "news hole" did not necessarily reflect local crime rates. They found that, independently of local crime rates, residents who were dependent on local TV news were more likely to be concerned about crime in their neighborhood. They argued that this was strong evidence of cultivation, because the beliefs about crime that were engendered by local news influenced the political agenda of viewers, making them more inclined to support repressive measures to reduce crime. Lee and Niederdeppe (2011) also found cultivation effects of local TV news viewing. They used longitudinal data to demonstrate an association between local TV news viewing and fatalistic cancer prevention beliefs. In the same study, they also showed an effect of

overall TV viewing time, which, they argued, supported the original hypothesis of cultivation theory.

Television news at the national level is also likely to influence beliefs about electoral politics and to imbue a sense of cynicism about the democratic process. Capella and Jamieson (1997) noted that news coverage of politics in the US uses a news frame that emphasizes the strategic nature of politics (e.g., horserace coverage) at the expense of coverage of policy differences. In a strategic news frame, the purpose of policy for politicians is to gain votes, increase poll numbers, and promote their candidacy. In contrast, issue framing is based on differences in policy positions that are important to voters, and not on how politicians are positioned to win or lose an election (Capella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 34). Capella and Jamieson argued that TV news coverage of politics is likely to imbue a sense of cynicism about the democratic process. In an experiment in which they exposed participants to repeated examples of one of the two types of coverage, Cappella and Jamieson (1997, p. 228) found that strategic coverage induces negative views of politicians, who are seen as motivated by self-interest rather than by the policy positions they hold. Thus a prediction from cultivation theory regarding TV's repeated construction of news was confirmed. However, the finding was produced specifically by news reporting rather than by overall TV content.

Third variable problem

The origins of this criticism began with Hirsch (1980) and were discussed above. Findings from many of the earliest studies, as well as the Morgan and Shanahan (1997) meta-analysis, were based on bivariate relationships that did not take into account other "control" variables. For example, correlations between television viewing and perceptions of crime prevalence were reduced when correlations were run within rather than across neighborhoods (Doob & Macdonald, 1979) – a finding that led to the concept of "resonance" between the media and lived experience. Also, the actual dangerousness of one's neighborhood may be a third variable that enhances a person's perception of violence and his/her tendency to stay home and watch television (Gunter & Wober, 1983). Nevertheless, Romer and colleagues (2003) found that, controlling for neighborhood and regional differences in crime, viewing of television news was related to fear of crime and to a sense of its importance as a political problem. However, this was an effect of local news viewing, and not one of overall TV watching.

One of the features of the extended meta-analysis by Shanahan and Morgan was an attempt to consider what, if any, variables might eliminate relations between TV viewing and beliefs. To do this, the authors examined studies in which control variables had been held constant in the relation between TV exposure and cultivation outcomes (see Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, p. 133 for details). This analysis was different from the moderator analysis they conducted because it examined effects after removing the contribution of the controls. The control variables they examined were sex, age, income, socioeconomic status (SES), political identification,

education, and race. Only three variables resulted in statistically different (lower) effect sizes for TV exposure: political identification, income, and education. Their analyses showed that cultivation effects were not reduced to zero when multiple controls were put in place. Thus there was evidence that the meta-analyses they conducted would still have shown a cultivation effect, even if demographic differences had been controlled.

One particularly interesting prediction regarding the effects of TV was advanced by Putnam (2000) in his analysis of declining social capital and its effects on political activity. Putnam's famous example of "bowling alone" forwarded the argument that excessive use of TV was a cause of the decline in social capital because it displaced time that was previously spent in activities like bowling leagues. In addition, he argued that exposure to TV cultivated a mean world outlook, which reduced trust in others and further undermined civic engagement. Uslaner (1998) as well as other researchers (e.g., Scheufele & Shah, 2000) have challenged the cultivation prediction by studying potential third variables that could explain both exposure to TV and lack of trust in others. In particular, Uslaner tested the effects of variation in a personality characteristic known as life outlook. Persons with a pessimistic life outlook may watch more television and have less trust in others, and this produces a spurious relation between TV exposure and social trust. Indeed, Uslaner found support for this prediction in surveys of adults. However, in a study of young people, Romer, Jamieson, and Pasek (2009) found that, even after controlling for life outlook, the total time spent watching TV was still inversely related to social trust. Thus it was not clear that this potential third variable can explain the relation between TV watching and lack of trust in others. However, support was found for a displacement effect of TV viewing, as youth reported less civic engagement as their TV watching increased. Nevertheless, although total time spent watching TV predicted less trust in others, measures of regular exposure to either TV news or entertainment programming were marginally *positively* related to trust in others. This finding was consistent with an earlier study showing that *moderate* use of TV can be positively related to civic engagement in young people (Pasek, Kenski, Romer, & Jamieson, 2006). This pattern of findings suggested that some other type of content was responsible for the inverse relation between total TV viewing and trust in others. We discuss possible interpretations of this and other findings regarding the effects of TV in our concluding section.

Other common critiques

While the most persistent and problematic critiques of cultivation theory are its lack of attention to content and third variables, several other critiques have persisted. One such critique concerns causal order. Distorted television portrayals may be an effect rather than a cause of public stereotypes, since television writers and producers tend to share common stereotypes or to believe that programs will get better ratings if they accord with viewers' preconceptions (Tannenbaum, 1963). Another common challenge in weighing the evidence for cultivation is that there is

no clear definition of what is meant by heavy and light viewers. These distinctions are often made on a sample-by-sample basis and are seen in relative terms (Morgan, 2009). The precision of these viewing measures may affect the ability to detect effects and to generalize findings across a body of research.

Finally, the relevance of cultivation theory and the influence of television in a new media environment is often called into question. Television continues to account for most of the time spent with the media by adolescents (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010) and adults (Nielsen, 2011) alike, but the platforms by which content is viewed continue to evolve. Does the way in which television is viewed matter for the purpose of cultivation? It may change the way we define and measure heavy and light viewers; and the accessibility of other audiovisual content – such as YouTube videos and online featurettes based on television shows – may blur the lines of what is considered television content. And perhaps most important is the fact that an ever-expanding catalog of television channels and genres has arguably altered television content in ways that challenge the cultivation premise associated with overarching themes and messages in all, or the majority of, programs.

How does cultivation work?

There has been a great deal of interest in explaining the mechanism through which cultivation might work, although such an explanation was not within the purview of the original cultivation hypothesis. Much of the evidence on the cognitive processing associated with cultivation is based on a series of laboratory experiments by Shrum and colleagues. Shrum and O'Guinn (1993) found that topics such as alcohol dependency and crime, which were frequently portrayed on TV, were more accessible in memory, as measured by response time, among heavy than light viewers. Other studies found no difference in response time between heavy and light viewers on a variety of constructs, but the subjective ease of recall was greater for heavy compared to lighter viewers. Shrum (1995, 1999) has argued that TV images are highly accessible in memory among heavy viewers, such that they tend to use these images as heuristic cues when making judgments. Romer and colleagues (2003) also argued that accessibility was a likely explanation for the effects of local TV news exposure on the salience and importance of crime as a political issue. Factors relevant to TV viewing that affect accessibility include the frequency and recency of activation of a particular topic (Wyer & Srull, 1989), vividness (Reyes, Thompson, & Bower, 1980) and distinctiveness (Higgins & King, 1981). There is evidence that cultivation judgments are more likely under heuristic processing and that systematic processing reduces cultivation effects (Shrum, 2001). For example, under increased time pressure, cultivation effects are enhanced.

Another possible mechanism involves how narratives are received and processed. Busselle, Ryabovolova, and Wilson (2004) describe a narrative theory in which viewers remember the narrative of a particular program, and Bilandzic and Busselle (2008) highlight "transportation," the tendency to become immersed in a story, as a critical component of TV effects (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004). Morgan and

Shanahan (2010, p. 345) note: "Their interesting but inconsistent results suggest that transportability (a personality trait) did affect transportation during exposure to stimulus films and also magnified cultivation in some cases."

Social Cognitive Theory

Although Gerbner's cultivation theory has been extremely influential in analysis of media effects, Bandura's social cognitive theory, and in particular his application of the theory to mass communication, the social cognitive theory of mass communication (SCTMC), highlights how media messages may influence viewers both in the short term and in the long term. In addition, the theory can explain how exposure to messages across a wide range of content, such as proposed by cultivation theory, can engender beliefs about the world that are potentially inaccurate or problematic (Bandura, 2009). For example, SCTMC attributes both short-term and long-term media influences on counter-normative behavior to the repeated portrayal of behaviors such as suicide (Jamieson & Romer, 2011) and other forms of violence (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006); and it explains these phenomena on the basis of the acquisition of cognitive schemas and scripts that encapsulate repeated exposure to those portrayals.

Bandura has long maintained that media portrayal could provide models of novel behavior, which is acquired through observational learning (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963). Subsequently Bandura (1986) developed a theory of observational learning that involves four major processes: attention, retention, production, and motivation. Attentional processes determine what is selectively observed. Retentional processes determine how observations are constructed and stored in memory. Behavioral production processes determine how remembered action is translated into behavior. Finally, motivational processes determine the conditions under which behavior is emitted on the basis of observing the situations that reward or punish the behavior. These processes explain how a viewer's cognitive schemas and behavior scripts (retention processes) are influenced by media exposure. The theory also explains how efficacy beliefs (production processes), as well as expectations of reward and understandings of opportunity structures, influence the motivation to engage in particular behaviors. Thus media influence may not be evident unless the situation is conducive to the behavior or the behavior is prompted by cues in the environment. Bandura also noted the role of media influence in social diffusion – a process whereby behavior change may be diffused through social networks, when people learn from those who have been directly influenced by media portrayals (Bandura, 2009).

Bandura (2009) argued that the SCTMC is consistent with cultivation theory in that heavy TV exposure may eventually inform viewers' conceptions of reality. However, he also noted the critiques from Hirsch (1980, 1981) and concerns about the use of heaviness of TV viewing as opposed to the actual TV content that is watched. From the perspective of SCTMC, content is critical to understanding

the effects of media influence. Bandura (2009) cited Hawkins and Pingree's (1982) review, which concluded that cultivation effects were most robust in leading viewers to adopt a distorted sense of real-world crime statistics and characteristics. However, from the perspective of SCTMC, these effects are understandable as the result of gradual exposure to media content that supports the development of schemas and other cognitive representations of the world.

Short- and Long-Term Effects of Media Exposure

Consistently with SCTMC, exposure to various forms of media content has been found to predict behavior outcomes in both the long and the short term. This has been particularly true for children and adolescents, in whom the socializing influence of the media is most readily observable. Two forms of content with the most extensive evidence in favor of such media influence are sex and violence. Sexual content in the media is especially problematic for adolescents because the risks and consequences of sex can be severe: they include unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Adolescents aged 12–17 who watched more sex on TV were found to engage more in sexual behavior a year after exposure (Collins et al., 2004). Other research found that, for white teenagers, exposure to more sex in TV as well as in movies, music, and magazines increased their sexual activity or hastened the likelihood of their sexual initiation (Brown et al., 2006). However, that study suggested that black teenagers' sexual behavior was predicted by the sexual behavior of their friends as well as by their own parents' expectations, rather than by media exposure.

Bushman and Huesmann (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of violence in TV, films, music, videogames, and comic books that analyzed 264 studies involving children and 167 studies involving adults. They found significant but modest effect sizes for media violence exposure with an average $r = 0.18$ (95% confidence interval [CI] = 0.17 to .19) for aggressive thoughts, $r = 0.19$ (95% CI = 0.19 to 0.20) for aggressive behavior, and $r = 0.27$ (95% CI = 0.24 to 0.30) for angry feelings. Violent media exposure also predicted less helping behavior. They found stronger effects for children than for adults in longitudinal studies, a result suggesting that the development of beliefs and schemas was more observable in children (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). A particularly striking example of the potential influence of TV exposure on children is an experimental study performed by Robinson, Wilde, Navracruz, Haydel, and Varady (2001), in which children aged 9 to 11 were not exposed to TV or violent videogames for a period of 6 months. Observations of those children revealed that they engaged in less aggressive behavior with peers than children who continued to be exposed to violent screen media.

Anderson and Bushman (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of various violent media effects. They found that playing violent videogames raised aggressive tendencies in children and young adults, increased aggressive thoughts and feelings,

raised arousal, and led to drops in prosocial behavior (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). These effects can be explained by learning and activation of scripts and schemas developed from exposure to media.

Williams (2006) experimentally tested whether cultivation resulted after a month of violent videogame playing (by comparison to control conditions) and examined whether exposure to specific content best explained the findings. With its mostly male adult subjects, the study found cultivation in perceptions that armed robbery would happen in real life, much as it was portrayed in the game. In addition, the study found that cultivation only occurred for those events that were specifically portrayed in the game, because violent videogame play did not generalize to changes in real-world crime perceptions that did not have direct parallels in the videogame (Williams, 2006). Thus Williams argued that the results showed the effects of cultivation, but only as a result of exposure to specific media content.

While cultivation theory emphasizes the gradual, pervasive negative influence from overall TV viewing, research suggests that educational TV portrayal can predict prosocial effects. Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, and Wright (2001) reported a prosocial effect of TV exposure in a correlational study controlling for parent education plus family structure – a study of mostly white middle-class preschoolers (age 5), who were interviewed years later, when they were 15–19. The researchers found prosocial effects predicted by the educational TV content these subjects had been exposed to and, most consistently in boys, viewing educational shows as preschoolers predicted more book reading, higher grades, more creativity, and less aggression in the adolescent years. They also found that adolescent girls who had watched more violent programming as preschoolers had worse grades than preschool girls who had been infrequent viewers (Anderson, et al., 2001). A review by Mares and Woodard (2005) details the evidence for the beneficial effects of media exposure in children.

Studies of exposure to harmful behaviors in the media, such as tobacco use (Wellman, Sugarman, DiFranza, & Winickoff, 2006) alcohol use (Sargent, Wills, Stoolmiller, Gibson, & Gibbons, 2006), and suicide (Jamieson, Romer, & Jamieson, 2006), have produced evidence of its effects on adolescents. Research has linked many of these behaviors with problematic outcomes. Hence knowing what media are watched and knowing their content appears to be important in understanding media influence, much as SCTMC suggests.

Recent Studies of Media Content

Most research tied to cultivation theory has focused on effects of media exposure. This stands in distinction to Gerbner's CIP, in which considerable effort was devoted to the content analysis of TV. Given this relative lack of attention to media content, the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania developed a project that builds on the legacy of the CIP. The Annenberg Coding of Health and Media Project (CHAMP) was designed with both the SCTMC and

cultivation theory as theoretical foundations. Just as the CIP had done, CHAMP analyzes large samples of US media content over long periods, going from 1950 to 2010 (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2012). The project also determines whether mass media entertainment has enduring themes and content that can either cultivate distortions in social reality or encourage the development of harmful behavior repertoires, especially in adolescents.

The CHAMP media sample includes a systematic cross-section of the 30 top-selling movies and highly rated TV dramas since 1950 in the US. It has assessed the potential cultivation impact of both these media, by measuring the frequency and the demographics of engagement in various risk behaviors such as tobacco and alcohol use, sex, violence, other drug use, and suicide. CHAMP has also captured the potential for modeling of these behaviors by rating their degree of explicit portrayal. For example, a verbal reference to a behavior, which would not be expected to provide much observational learning, was coded low on this scale, whereas the complete portrayal of the behavior was coded as high.

While it is important to note that movie exposure has not been nearly as dominant as TV exposure, CHAMP movie findings support some of Gerbner's prime-time TV findings. Converging with Gerbner and colleagues' (1980a) analyses of TV, CHAMP found that movies featured male main characters twice as often as female characters and that this pattern remained the same over the entire 56-year study period (Bleakley, Jamieson, & Romer, 2012). Furthermore, female characters were more often seen engaging in sexual behavior, while males were more likely to be violent. The project also found that violent content (Nalkur, Jamieson, & Romer, 2010) including suicide, strongly increased over time. In particular, explicit movie suicide portrayal tripled from 1950 to 2006 (Jamieson & Romer, 2011).

The findings from CHAMP demonstrate that popular mass media entertainment has recurring themes and portrays men and women in stereotypical roles, which can cultivate differences in audience gender stereotypes. Consistently with SCTMC, these recurring themes and behavioral patterns can also encourage the development of stereotypical forms of gendered behavior by direct modeling of males as violent and of females as sex objects.

Cultivation theory would expect that, for heavy movie viewers, gendered portrayals have maintained outlooks and beliefs supporting male dominance and power by over-representing male main characters and by showing them more often engaged in violence. With fewer female main characters and more of them shown engaging in sex, movies may also have cultivated beliefs supporting the representation of females as sex objects. These potential cultivation effects would be problematic for advancing women's leadership in society and could place women into a "double bind" that emphasizes their being valued for their sexual appeal or reproductive capacity, and not for their minds (Jamieson, 1995). Thus, in agreement with cultivation theory, there is strong evidence for dominant themes and representations in the media that have persisted and in some cases grown since the advent of TV.

Future Directions in Cultivation Theory Research

Our review of the history of, and continuing interest in, effects under the rubric of cultivation theory suggests that the theory's influence will endure. The theory points to patterns of media content that can explain a wide array of media effects, which have important implications for the socialization of children and for adults' constructions of reality. At the same time, it is important to recognize that much of the original emphasis that Gerbner placed on the motives of those who control mass media programming has not been questioned. Gerbner's initial concerns about the influence of mass media focused on how the interests of those who control these media promote a distorted image of the world – an image that can maintain a public subservient to those interests. Nevertheless, there are other equally plausible media interests that can drive program content. For example, Hamilton (1998) argues persuasively that much of the motivation for the media's reliance on violence is related to their ability to draw audiences. Thus advertisers will be more likely to support programs with violence because those programs will reach more viewers, especially those in demographic segments valued by advertisers (e.g., younger viewers). Writers of TV scripts will then rely on cultural stereotypes to portray violence; for instance they will place a focus on men engaging in violence, while women will serve as objects of sexual interest. Furthermore, the presence of violence in TV content, while wide-ranging, is not ubiquitous and varies greatly by program genre (Hamilton, 1998). In addition, CHAMP analyses (Nalkur et al., 2010) have shown that violence, once relegated to top-grossing R-rated movies (i.e., movies restricted to persons over the age of 17), has become more prevalent over time in films rated as PG-13 (i.e., in movies recommended for anyone over the age of 12). This pattern is understandable from an economic perspective, because R-rated films draw smaller audiences. Thus future tests of cultivation theory could focus on more fine-grained analyses of media content to determine whether this content actually reflects the production processes that Gerbner originally proposed or alternative models, based on purely economic motives.

A second concern about cultivation theory is the proposition that TV content has largely negative effects on viewers. Considerable research suggests that the effects of TV content are difficult to characterize. For example, studies by Pasek and colleagues (2006) and Romer and colleagues (2009) suggest that moderate use of TV is associated with increased civic engagement and greater social trust in young people. Furthermore, one of TV's major influences appears to be its displacement of socially beneficial activity (à la Putnam) rather than its direct adverse effects. This suggests that more research should be directed toward the factors that encourage excessive TV viewing rather than to the effects of TV viewing per se.

A final question worthy of further research concerns a source of adverse effects that has not received as much attention in cultivation research as entertainment programming, namely the influence of advertising. Commercial messages have long been a staple of TV content, and these messages can cultivate beliefs and attitudes

as well. For example, advertising has been associated with body image problems (Groesz, Levine, & Murren, 2002) and with impulsive behavior in general (Romer, 2008). Advertising also promotes materialist values that can create envy and retard social trust in youth (Milner, 2004; Rahn & Transue, 1998). It could well be that many adverse effects of TV viewing are carried by advertising, in addition to or in place of the entertainment that it supports.

The Legacy of Cultivation Theory

Our review of cultivation theory documents the remarkable legacy of George Gerbner's work. We have little doubt that his legacy will continue to inspire research and critical thinking about the role of the media in society.

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8

Media Ecology
Contexts, Concepts, and Currents

Casey Man Kong Lum

What Is Media Ecology?

Media ecology is the study of the symbiotic relationship between people and the media technologies they create and use. It is "the study of media as environments" (Postman, 1970, p. 161) and of the way in which and extent to which complex communication systems impact upon how people think, feel, and behave (Nystrom, 1973). Embedded in the ecological approach to understanding media as environments is "the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs" (Strate, 1999, p. 1). But, while media ecology acknowledges the defining role of the intrinsic form or structure of media in human communication, it does not suggest a direct, simple, linear model of cause and effect (McLuhan & McLuhan, 2011). In fact, the notion of studying the media as environments emphasizes the complex and multidimensional interaction between people, their media, and other social forces.

The Rise of Media Ecology: A Brief Account

At one level we can conceptualize media ecology as a theory group within the larger context of the intellectual history of communication scholarship. According to Murray (1994, 1998), the condition of the coexistence of three factors must be met for a theory group to materialize itself: good ideas, intellectual leadership, and organizational leadership. A theory group is defined, first and formally, by the set of its distinctly identifiable ideas and research questions – or by its paradigm content. In the sociology of science (Fleck, 1979), a theory group typically consists of

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a community of scholars who share a more or less coherent set of ideas or theoretical perspectives on the object of their academic inquiry. Over time the teaching and the scholarship of these thinkers help to facilitate theoretical and methodological advancements within the existing paradigm of their field – that is, within what is known in the sociology of science as "normal science" (Kuhn, 1962). On some rare occasions, as I suggested elsewhere,

> the ideas, theories, and or methods of inquiry championed by a theory group over time help facilitate a paradigmatic shift in an entire discipline – a foundational change in how the discipline in question conceptualizes the nature of what it studies (its epistemology) as in the case of the shift from Newtonian physics to quantum physics. (Lum, 2006b, p. 7)

Some of the major foundational or paradigm-setting scholars whose theories (or *good ideas*) most closely associated with the emergence of media ecology as a theory group are Mumford (1934, 1938, 1967, 1970) and Eisenstein (1979, 1983) in the history of technology, Langer (1942, 1967, 1972, 1982) in philosophy, Innis (1950, 1951, 2003, n.d.) in political economy, McLuhan (1962, 1964) in literature, culture, and technology, Carpenter (1960, 1972) in anthropology – and also through his works with McLuhan in the 1960s (Carpenter & McLuhan, 1960) – Eric Havelock (1963, 1976) and Ong (1967, 1982, 2002) in classics and in orality and literacy studies, Ellul (1964, 1965, 1985) in sociology, and Postman (1970, 1979, 1985, 1992) in education and communication. These scholars and their like-minded contemporaries came from a multitude of disciplinary as well as national, geopolitical, and sociocultural backgrounds. As some of these thinkers' works and perspectives on culture, communication, and technology overlapped, their combined scholarship, taken together as a whole, spanned over a century. At this level, media ecology as a theory group may also be considered an intellectual tradition that has developed through an interlocking network of "invisible colleges" (Crane, 1972; Griffith & Mullins, 1972) – that is, more or less closely knit and yet informal groups of like-minded thinkers from diverse scholarly orientations.

The University of Toronto and New York University are two of the institutions of higher learning said to have been responsible for the initial institutionalization of media ecology as an organized field of study. To begin with, McLuhan has been widely regarded as one of the most notable intellectual leaders in and *for* the rise media ecology (Lum, 2006c; Morrison, 2006; Strate, 2006). His original, paradigmatic ideas about media and culture, and in particular about the formal cause of media and its profound impact on people, stirred up much attention and controversy in the academe after the publication of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (McLuhan, 1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964). They also captivated the public imagination to such an extent that, during the 1960s and 1970s, the popular media dubbed him a media guru (McDonald, 2011; Playboy interview, 1969). McLuhan taught at St. Michael College, at the University of Toronto, and it is from there that he helped facilitate the genesis of the media ecology movement.

On the other hand, Postman was among the most important organizational leaders in the institutionalization of media ecology as a formal field of academic study (Gencarelli, 2006; Lum, 2006b). It was at New York University that Postman founded, in 1971, a PhD program in media ecology, together with his two former graduate students and long-time colleagues Terence P. Moran and Christine L. Nystrom; the latter was the first to write a doctoral dissertation in media ecology (Nystrom, 1973). This was a notable development, partly because it institutionalized media ecology as a formal, accredited academic field of study in the form of a degree-granting graduate-level curriculum. It was the first doctoral program with the name of media ecology in it. Embedded in this program's first 20 years of development was a paradigm content-building process in which Postman, together with his faculty colleagues and graduate students, helped bring together the good ideas of the formerly invisible college of like-minded scholars from a multitude of disciplines so as to form not only a structured curriculum but also a set of coherent theoretical perspectives. This process went beyond the "meeting of minds" on the intellectual or symbolic plane. Through seminars and conferences, the PhD program actually invited media ecology-minded scholars, including some of the theory group's paradigm thinkers – such as Eisenstein, McLuhan, and Mumford – to share their good ideas.

Before returning to the more recent development of media ecology as a theory group in the chapter summary, in the following sections I will provide a brief introduction to some of the key concepts of media ecology as a theoretical perspective. The discussion will focus on some theoretical generalizations about how media ecology conceptualizes the symbiotic relationships between and across culture, communication, and technology.

Contextualizing the Media

From the perspective of media ecology, communication media are not neutral or value-free containers or conduits for carrying information from one place to another. As shall be explained below, every communication technology has its own unique set of physical, technical, symbolic, and environmental characteristics. These intrinsic characteristics, or biases, will define the manner in which each communication medium is to be used to encode, store, disseminate, retrieve, and decode information, and they will correspondingly help determine the nature and outcome of human communication that the technology is used to facilitate.

Contextually, every communication technology is the embodiment of some human ideas designed to address certain perceived and or existing communication issues. Hence a unique set of assumptions and ideas is embedded in every communication, information, or media technology – or "technique": that is, the specific means to accomplish a desired outcome and the procedures associated with it; an agenda is designed about how the communication issues are supposed to

be addressed. These communication issues can be social, economic, political, and cultural, as well as technical or engineering in nature. Technically, for example, Morse's telegraph is a far superior technology in long-distance telecommunication than all its predecessors, including optical telegraphy, smoke signal, the drum – and, for that matter, Tarzan's yell or the likes of it. As part of an added provision in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the V-chip was conceived and introduced as a technology to help parents regulate what their children can or cannot watch on TV (the "v" in V-chip stands for violence, as in violent content on TV).

In other words, no communication technology exists in a vacuum. This theoretical generalization suggests that we need to closely examine the specific social, economic, political, and cultural contexts in which every communication technology is conceived and made to materialize into being – that is, the contextual biases of the media. Some of the research questions along this line include: Who conceived the communication technology? For whom was the technology developed – whose communication problems was it designed to resolve – and why? What might have been the social, economic, political, or cultural agenda, or the motives behind the conception, development, and propagation of the technology? How have these social, economic, political or cultural agenda, motives, or biases been embedded or materialized in the technology and how can we uncover such biases?

The Symbolic Biases of Media

Embedded in every medium is a set of intrinsic symbolic features or biases. What we want or need to know about the media – and, for that matter, the way we analyze the media – is dependent upon how we conceptualize what the media are. For example, Meyrowitz (1998) suggests that there are at least three different types of media literacy. If we consider the media as containers of information or conduits of information, then we need to acquire media content literacy – the ability to analyze intended and unintended messages, different genres of media content, the cultural, institutional, and commercial biases of media content creation, as well as an audience's reception of media content or its readings of media texts. On the other hand, if we were to view different media as having their own unique language, then we should acquaint ourselves with media grammar literacy. Possessing this second type of media literacy means understanding and recognizing the range of production variables that are specific to each medium – be it the film medium, the TV medium, or any other (Meyrowitz, 1998). A more advanced stage of understanding of this kind would require our ability to use and manipulate these production variables so as to create our own media content and to demonstrate our critical awareness of the political economy of media making as well as our appreciation of how these production variables, when deployed in specific manners, may impact upon the audience's perceptions, feelings, perhaps even behaviors – and to what extent they may do so.

Indeed, according to media ecology, inherited in every communication medium is a unique set of symbolic forms, features, or characteristics for encoding, representing, and decoding content or messages. These symbolic forms entail codes and syntax – or what Meyrowitz (1998) calls a media grammar – that are unique to each medium; and the syntax should help us make sense of the codes when these are put together or composed. At the surface level, we can conceptualize these symbolic forms as something external to us, something that we use to compose our message or to create content with, whether the messages are paintings on cave walls, fiction or nonfiction novels, still pictures, radio programs, movies, television programs, or blogs on the World Wide Web.

At another level, media ecology suggests that the symbolic forms of every medium constitute what can be conceptualized as a symbolic environment. To acquire fluency in using any medium, we need to master both its vocabulary and its grammar or syntax. But, as we master the symbolic forms of the medium, we also become acculturated into the medium's symbolic environment or structure. As I suggested elsewhere: "Although we feel or otherwise sense the physical world around us through our sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, we think, perceive, and talk about or represent it from within the intrinsic symbolic universe of the medium" (Lum, 2006b, p. 30). From this perspective, we do not stand outside of the media. Instead we are situated in the middle of it; it is the symbolic structure within and through which we encode, decode, or otherwise ideate and talk about what we sense or know about the world around us.

At yet another level, owing to differences in their respective symbolic forms, different media have different content biases. That is, each medium has its unique strength and weakness as to what it can or cannot do well symbolically. Postman (1985) spoke of how smoke signals may not have been an efficient symbolic medium:

> While I do not know exactly what content was once carried in the smoke signals of American Indians, I can safely guess that it did not include philosophical argument. Puffs of smoke are insufficiently complex to express ideas on the nature of existence, and even if they were not, a Cherokee philosopher would run short of either wood or blankets long before he reached his second axiom. You cannot use smoke to do philosophy. Its form excludes the content. (Postman, 1985, p. 7)

It is at this level – where Meyrowitz (1998, p. 103) talks about his notion of "medium literacy" – that we learn about how "each medium is a type of setting or environment that has relatively fixed [*sc.* intrinsic] characteristics that influence communication in a particular manner – regardless of the choice of content elements and regardless of the particular manipulation of production variables." Incidentally, this notion of medium literacy echoes Postman's (1970) first public definition of media ecology as the study of media as environments; it also captures the fact that media ecology is an attempt to uncover the implicit intrinsic structures of these environments and their impact on human perception, understanding, and feeling.

Media as the Extensions of the Human Sensorium

According to McLuhan (1964), the media with and *through* which we interact with the world around us are in essence extensions of our sensory apparatus. On this assumption, every communication medium has a built-in set of intrinsic sensory characteristics that are meant to enhance our ability to "sense" the world. From this perspective, the study of media is therefore the study of our extensions. As Moran (2010) put it:

> All human communication is founded upon our language-structured ability to stretch the boundaries of our senses by inferring how the realities of time/space and energy/matter operate, and to imagine, design, and construct techniques and technologies of communication that are able to provide and share more information than is naturally available through our sensory receptors. (Moran, 2010, p. 1)

For example, the medium of film, the telescope, and the microscope enable us to see things in ways that our naked eyes cannot. Audio recording technology of all kinds, the radio, and portable audio playback media allow us to experience sounds, "natural" or engineered, in ways that our ears alone cannot provide.

By the same token, our use of every medium would inevitably reconfigure our biological sensorium. This helps explain McLuhan's (1964) aphorism "the medium is the message," with which he argued that a shift in our use of the media will alter our sensorial configuration or ratio and in the process will bring us a different set of sensory data from (and *about*) the environment, which will in turn change the ways in which we perceive what the world (or "reality") will be like as a result. This may explain why answering calls on our cell phone can impact upon our concentration on driving as our heightened auditory sense interferes with our vision and with our hand–eye coordination. Needless to say, we can always "do something" to compensate for the altered sensorium by trying to pay "more (visual) attention" to the driving while talking on the cell phone – or, to switch to another example, by "visualizing" what Hogwarts "may" look like while reading Harry Potter in print and before seeing any of the movies in the series.

The Physical Forms and Biases of Media

Inherited in every communication technology is a set of unique physical or functional forms, features, and characteristics. Hence each media technology has its unique strength and weakness in what it can or cannot do well, physically or functionally. As some of my friends in the information technology field like to say, a smoke signal just does not have the bandwidth or infrastructure to carry or transmit the kind and amount of data or information that a 4G network would. By extension, different media can and often do help induce their unique physical or functional impact. In this regard, we can further understand how the intrinsic

physical form of any given medium may facilitate its kinds of impact on human communication.

First, media ecology posits that, because of the different physical forms in which the media encode, store, and transmit information, different media have different temporal and spatial biases (Innis, 1951, 2003). As Innis (1950) put it:

> Media that emphasize time are those durable in character such as parchment, clay and stone. The heavy materials are suited to the development of architecture and sculpture. Media that emphasize space are apt to be less durable and light in character such as papyrus and paper. The latter are suited to wide areas in administration and trade. The conquest of Egypt by Rome gave access to supplies of papyrus, which became the basis of a large administrative empire. Materials that emphasize time favour decentralization and hierarchical types of institutions, while those that emphasize space favour centralization and systems of government less hierarchical in character. (Innis, 1950, p. 7)

Translated into more contemporary processes, the more ephemeral, space-biased electronic media – for instance the Internet or the satellite – allow for the speedy and efficient long-distance transmission and sharing of information among millions of people across national borders, thus paving the way for the rise of globalization at a scale that has not been witnessed before the advent of electronic communications.

At another level, media ecology also contends that, because of structural differences between them – difference of physical form in their conditions of attendance – different media have different social biases, that is, differences in how they may impact the patterns or dynamics of human interaction and audience reception. Not only does this level of analysis tie the medium to the place where it is used (or attended to), it also transforms the entire environment into a multifaceted medium, as Postman (1970) suggested when he claimed that media ecology is also about the study of environments as media. For example, how may the interactional dynamics among viewers of a movie on TV in someone's living room differ from those that take place among viewers of the same movie at a multiplex in a shopping mall? How may the two sets of social experiences and audience receptions of the content of the (same) movie differ – or concur? This level of analysis has become more and more complex and difficult to perform as media technologies have in the past couple of decades become less and less space-, place-, or time-bound. Millions of people regularly access various media contents or communicate with others increasingly by using portable devices, with no regard for time, place, or space. The proliferation of digital, online, and mobile media technologies has introduced a whole new set of intriguing and interesting opportunities for understanding how the fast-evolving physical form of tele/communications may impact human communication in mediated social environments of diverse sorts.

Moreover, regardless of their differences in physical form and materiality, all media, as physical objects and commercial products or commodities, can and do have environmental consequences of all kinds. Admittedly this is an aspect that has

received relatively little attention in the field, perhaps in part because it does not seem to have any direct bearing on human communication. But, if we were to consider how the things we do to the natural ecology may impact upon our culture and upon human development, this aspect should be of vital interest to us all. Mumford (1934), for example, had long decried the environmentally detrimental effect of mining for raw materials and energy in the development of technics – as well as that of the production of technology of all kinds, throughout the centuries. Meanwhile end-of-life, obsolete, defective, or discarded electronic equipment and materials – such as cell phones, fax machines, personal computers, photocopiers, stereo equipment, tape recorders, and television sets – are among the most common sources of e-waste in the US. Many of these e-wasters were shipped for disposal overseas, most notably in less economically developed parts of Asia and Africa.

The Inevitability and Unpredictability of Consequences

After its introduction, every communication technology or medium will inevitably have some social, psychological, economic, political, and/or cultural impact upon people. That is, to media ecologists, the question is not "whether" the media may affect people or society. Instead media ecology is concerned with what effects the media engender, who is affected, how, to what extent, and why.

To a certain extent, some media impacts are known or (more or less) anticipated. After all, all the communication media or techniques are conceived, designed, and developed to help address some preexisting or perceived issues in human communication, as has already been suggested above. Pioneers in the technical field of computer engineering and software development knew in advance that the objects they invented could process data in the digital form in a manner and at a speed that humans cannot muster, precisely because the computer is built to perform such tasks. The inventors and developers of television knew ahead of time that people would get to see moving images and to listen to sounds from afar, because that was what television, as a technology, was supposed to do.

However, while more or less immediate or short-range effects of this sort are known in advance, many consequences of media technological diffusion are unexpected or unpredictable. It is because what actually happens in the long run – the "ripple effects" – involves a multitude of social, economic, political, and cultural factors and also, at the microscopic level, human perceptions, motivations, and emotions that are in the main hard to predict. While for example the metal movable-type printing press was used to do what it was designed to do – to efficiently reproduce information on a large scale – no one at the time of its introduction, not even its inventor, Johannes Gutenberg, could have foreseen how it would have a role in many profound changes, such as the rise of modern science or the process of setting the stage for the Reformation (Eisenstein, 1979). The Internet or the World Wide Web as we know them today were not in the cards when the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the US Department of Defense decided to

fund the research for the development of computer networks during the Cold War. When he wrote the program for the first email system that he implemented on the ARPANET in 1971, Raymond Tomlinson was not thinking about the fact that emailing could fundamentally change the ways in which millions upon millions of people communicate – or could, for that matter, impact upon the preexisting print-based postal system and its related businesses. As Myrna Frommer (1987) contends, even the most brilliant of inventors – the likes of Samuel Morse, Thomas Edison, and Alexander Graham Bell – could not have anticipated the kind and extent of impact that their innovations would have on human civilization.

Media Do and Undo: A Faustian Bargain

All media technological changes entail a Faustian bargain, in that there is always a *price* or a *trade-off* embedded in every medium that we are offered. The nature of the price we have to pay – either at the individual or at the collective level – varies from circumstance to circumstance. It can be a matter of monetary compensation, such as the purchase price of a late-model smart phone or the monthly subscription fee of Internet or cable service. But many other forms of "cost" – social, political, psychological, or cultural – can be (and often are) very difficult to gauge. While placing surveillance at street corners may have engendered a sense of heightened security in some people, everyone in the community nonetheless has to sacrifice an extent of his or her privacy. Planned obsolescence in the development and marketing of media technologies has resulted in more and more e-waste being discarded at a faster and faster rate into our natural environments. While the Internet and mobile telecommunication devices of all kinds have helped remove the constraints of time and space in human communication, these forms of communication have also helped induce a new level of psychological stress on their users. From a slightly different perspective, for every advantage a new communication medium offers or introduces, there is always a corresponding disadvantage. While our PDA (personal data assistant) gives us an efficient means of recording information, for example, it also helps to undo our memory or diminish our capacity of memorizing.

At another level, media ecology is also concerned with how the advantages and disadvantages that innovations or new media bring to society are never distributed evenly among the population, either within a society or across national borders. Uneven accessibility to the media is a result of the relative complexity of the intrinsic formal characteristics of the media and is partly due to various other social, economic, political, and cultural forces. At the formal level, for example, writing systems that are very complex would require comparably more social and economic resources for its acquisition. This has been one of the major reasons why the government in China has embarked upon a multi-decade program designed to simplify the characters of the traditional Chinese writing system. The simplified version of the character for dragon has only five strokes, whereas its older, traditional counterpart has an upward of 17 individual strokes. By way of an inter-system

comparison, it has been widely agreed that phonetically based alphabetic writing systems are typically simpler in their structure and therefore easier to learn than, say, logographic and pictographic writing systems. In short, while literacy offers many benefits to those who can have access to it, its accessibility may vary among people in different classes of society.

From another (though not necessarily different) perspective, every medium benefits some people better than others, while some people may have to pay a higher price and get less in return – or worse. For example, many customers in the more affluent parts of the world can afford and get to enjoy, to their personal or professional advantage, the benefits of successive generations or models of electronic media technologies; at the same time, however, many people, including children, in economically less developed nations work in toxic or hazardous conditions at dumped sites that are littered with discarded electronics in exchange for very little financial return, in order to maintain a low level of sustenance.

Media Ecology as Historiography

There are many approaches to studying history or conceptualizing, understanding, and writing about various aspects of our past. We can write about history by studying the rise and fall of empires or nations through the lens of successive reigns of rulers, of changes from one dynasty to the next, or of transformative events such as the World Wars, decisive battles, and revolutions. There are histories that focus on specific individuals, whose lives or actions may have been deemed worthy of being told and retold for their supposed social, political, or cultural significance or for their inspirational force. We may also understand human development by studying the major materials that people in different regions around the world used through the ages – in the stone age, in the bronze age, and so on. Of particular interest to media ecologists has been the way Lewis Mumford examined the role of technical cultures in human civilization – namely through "three successive but over-lapping and interpenetrating phases: eotechnic, paleotechnic, neotechnic" (1934, p. 109). According to Mumford, each of these phases "has its origin in certain definite regions and tends to employ certain special resources and raw materials" – what Mumford called the water-and-wood complex of the eotechnic phase, the coal-and-iron complex of the paleotechnic phase, and the electricity-and-alloy complex of the neotechnic phase. Next,

> Each phase has its specific means of utilizing and generating energy, and its special forms of production. Finally, each phase brings into existence particular types of workers, trains them in particular ways, develops certain aptitudes and discourages others, and draws upon and further develops certain aspects of the social heritage. (Mumford, 1934, pp. 109–110)

Indeed, embedded in media ecology is a unique historiography that focuses on understanding the defining role of the media or modes of communication in

human development. It is an historiography that has been inspired in part by Mumford's own epochal work of understanding technical cultures in human history. In media ecology we may conceptualize human history along four overlapping and interrelated epochs, which are characterized by four major media of human communication: orality, literacy, typography, and electronic media (Lum, 2006c). More recent scholarship in the field (Moran, 2010) suggests a finer distinction among different categories of media technologies after the advent of printing (typography) – for example hypergraphic media (as in graphics, photography, and cinematography), electrographic and electrophonic media (such as radio and television), and cybernetic media (as in digital media, which include Internet-based communication).

It is important to emphasize that the "epochs of media" approach to understanding the role of communication in human development does not suggest a simple or direct causal relationship between media technologies and human cultures; it does not promote a "technological determinism" – the idea, theory, or argument that technology is the prime determinant of unavoidable social change or, more broadly, of history (Smith, 1994). On a paradigmatic plane, the *ecology* in "media ecology" clearly indicates an acute theoretical awareness of the complex and dynamic process of symbiosis among the diverse forces within any system of human communication or social environment. As Mumford (1934) put it:

> No matter how completely technics relies upon the objective procedures of the sciences, it does not form an independent system, like the universe: it exists as an element in human culture and it promises well or ill as the social groups that exploit it promise well or ill. The machine itself makes no demands and holds out no promises: it is the human spirit that makes demands and keeps promises. (Mumford, 1934, p. 6)

This is one of the major reasons why Mumford, who in my view has been grossly misunderstood as a technological determinist, would have conceptualized the development of technics and its role in human civilization as a process of syncretism (pp. 107–109). Of course, this does not suggest that technology, or communication technology in particular, does not have certain intrinsic features, characteristics, or biases that allow its user to perform certain tasks better or more efficiently than others (or discourage its user for performing certain tasks); as has been suggested in the above section, technology has such features. From this perspective, media ecology or its historiography by epochs is in part a study of how and how much people use, or relate to, the media within (and perhaps beyond) the constraints that are inherent in the media's intrinsic formal features and characteristics. In this regard, what we know as human culture is largely the result of the ongoing symbiosis between people and the social, economic, political, and environmental forces they interact with, either as individuals or collectively.

In other words, when studying oral cultures, media ecologists do not lock themselves into focusing on how oral speech – given its intrinsic symbolic, sensorial, temporal, spatial, and physical characteristics – may have a direct causal impact on people.

Instead they are more interested in finding out (1) the reasons why oral people encode, store, disseminate, represent, share, and decode (2) the kinds of information, ideas, or messages they do and (3) in the manners they do it, as well as (4) the various social, economic, political, and cultural ramifications that result from it. By applying the same theoretical principle, we can use this and other related questions to frame our study of the symbiotic relationships between culture, communication, and technology in the other media ages or epochs. In addition, it is suggested that a comparative analysis of the differences and similarities between the ages of communication – from primary oral cultures to cybernetic cultures – will yield important insights into how the intrinsic, formal features or biases of communication media may play the role they do in the development of human culture or civilization over time.

On the other hand, media ecologists should be mindful about avoiding universalism in their analysis. While it is well noted in media ecology literature that formal characteristics (or what is also known as the formal cause of media) do play a defining role in how people communicate (McLuhan & McLuhan, 2011), what actually transpires through the communication process and thereafter can and does differ from one context to another. For example, as Zhou He (1994) argues, due to different social, economic, and political factors, the movable type was diffused in China in a manner and at a pace that were noticeably different from the manner and pace of the diffusion of the Gutenberg press in Early Modern Europe, even though the Chinese invented the technology centuries before Gutenberg did.

Discussion: Currents in Media Ecology

What has been presented above is a brief introduction to some aspects of the contexts in which media ecology came into being as a theory group, as well as several of media ecology's theoretical perspectives on understanding the symbiotic relationships between culture, communication, and technology. Much has changed since McLuhan's initial rise to prominence, when his influence radiated from his institutional home at the University of Toronto, and since the founding of the doctoral program in media ecology at New York University (NYU). Several dozens of graduate students have received their doctorates in media ecology from this program, and some of them teach now in universities across the United States and elsewhere in the world.

But, as media ecology has ceased to be the focus of the graduate program at NYU some time after the passing of Neil Postman in 2003, much of the organizational support for the advancement of media ecology as a theory group has shifted to the Media Ecology Association (MEA) (Lum, 2006a). The MEA was founded on September 4, 1998, by five of Postman's former doctoral students, Barnes, Gencarelli, Levinson, Lum, and Strate, during a meeting at Fordham University in New York City. From the point of view of understanding the role of organizational leadership and support not only in the rise but also in the ongoing

development of the theory group, it is important to highlight the stated mission of the MEA:

- to promote, sustain, and recognize excellence in media ecology scholarship, research, criticism, application, and artistic practice;
- to provide a network for fellowship, contacts, and professional opportunities;
- to serve as a clearinghouse for information related to academic programs around the world in areas pertinent to the study of media ecology;
- to promote community and cooperation among academic, private, and public entities mutually concerned with the understanding of media ecology;
- to provide opportunities for professional growth and development;
- to encourage interdisciplinary research and interaction;
- to encourage reciprocal cooperation and research among institutions and organizations;
- to provide a forum for student participation in an academic and professional environment;
- to advocate for the development and implementation of media ecology education at all levels of curricula (see the "About MEA" section of the organization's website at http://www.media-ecology.org/about/).

The mission statement above indicates how the MEA has taken on the role of an active agent of institutional support for the ongoing advancement of media ecology as a theory group. The invisible college of media ecologists or like-minded scholars from diverse backgrounds has become more and more *visible* through their active participation in and contribution to ongoing discussions in *Explorations in Media Ecology* (MEA's own refereed journal), the association's online listserv, and the MEA's own annual convention, which has been sponsored and hosted by institutions of higher learning in the US, Mexico, and Canada. The MEA also sponsors and showcases current research in media ecology at various academic conferences held by the National Communication Association, the International Communication, or the Eastern Communication Association.

An equally important aspect of media ecology's development as a theoretical perspective has been the rise of a new generation of media ecology scholarship, as well as a renewed interest in McLuhan's works since late in the 1990s. In addition to a steady, growing crop of research articles appearing in *Explorations in Media Ecology*, a succession of books have also been published during recent years on various aspects of media ecology such as communication history (Moran, 2010), ethics (Anton, 2010), general semantics (Elson, 2010; Strate, 2011), intellectual history or origins (Lamberti, 2012, Lum, 2006c; Strate, 2006), language, metaphor, mind, and culture (de Kerckhove, 2010; Gozzi, 1999; Logan, 2003, 2008; van den Berg & Walsh, 2011), McLuhan studies (Coupland, 2010; Logan, 2013; Strate & Wachtel, 2005; Theall, 2001), new or digital media (Levinson, 1997, 1999, 2012; Logan, 2010; Rushkoff, 2006; Zingrone, 2004), Ong and the relationship between orality and literacy studies (Farrell, 2000; Farrell & Soukup, 2012; Harp, 2009) or

between orality and religion (Fry & Jo Lewis, 2008; Iwuchukwu, 2010), and visual communication (Nayar, 2010) – to name just a few.

In addition, in recent years media ecology has also attracted increasing attention from scholars outside of North America. The 2007 annual convention of the MEA was sponsored by the Tecnológico de Monterrey, Estado de México, in Mexico and was very well attended by scholars and students not only from Mexico City but also from various countries in Latin America. There has also been an increasing number of exchanges between media ecology scholars in North America and their counterparts in Europe in the form of discussions on the MEA listserv, international conference attendances, speech invitations, and the like. Media ecology scholarship from North America has also been relatively well received in various countries in Asia, most notably in China. In addition, there has been an increasing number of Chinese scholars writing about matters relating to media ecology from various Chinese perspectives and quite a number of books by media ecologists have been translated into Chinese and published. A partial listing includes Mumford (1934, 1938), Innis (1950, 1951), McLuhan (1962, 1964), Ong (1982), Postman (1982, 1985, 1992), Eisenstein (1979), Levinson (1997, 1999, 2004), Logan (2003), Meyrowitz (1985), and Lum (2006c).

In short, the study of the media as environments and of environments as media started with the ecological movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Media ecology's history as a theory group embodies a profound intellectual tradition. It is clear from recent developments that media ecology will continue to evolve and will develop into one of the most exciting theoretical perspectives in communication. But how and to what extent media ecology can be a truly viable, coherent system of theoretical perspectives would depend on how well it can be adapted to help explain the complex symbiotic relationships between culture, technology, and communication in diverse social, economic, political, and cultural contexts.

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9

Dramatistic Theory
A Burkeian Approach to the 2004 Madrid Terrorist Attacks

Cristina Zurutuza-Muñoz

Communication Studies and Dramatistic Theory

Within communication theory there is a group of authors who study communication with a wider focus: they are not exclusively limited to the area of communication. Those are the dramatistic theorists, who adopt the perspective of action theory. The model they propose can be applied to any human action – and, of course, to communicative actions as human ones (Martín-Algarra & López-Escobar, 1992, pp. 449–466).

Among the main authors whose work can be included in this category are Kenneth Burke, Erving Goffman, and Ernest Bormann. These authors treat action as drama, as play in the dramaturgical sense. Communication, as a human act, likewise is drama, an action set on a stage. These authors also understand communication as an action loaded with symbolic meaning beyond the mere external communicative transaction. To these authors, the communicative phenomenon is an "exchange of symbolic actions" – and one that contributes to the construction of society (Martín-Algarra & López-Escobar, 1992, p. 450).

In contrast to what happens with other theories within communication studies, dramatistic theories do not fit with a particular trend or school of thought. While Burke is the most widely cited dramatistic author in communication, both Goffman's work in empirical sociology and Bormann's in ethnomethodological sociology are useful to the dramatistic approach (Littlejohn, 1989; Martín-Algarra & López-Escobar, 1992, p. 451). Dramatism is not a unified theory but "an 'interest group' or coalition of theories that share a metaphor rather than any particular set of theoretical terms or principles" (Littlejohn, 1989, p. 109).

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It may seem that these theories have been influenced by the sociological trend of symbolic interactionism, as they keep a close relationship with it, and thus are moving away from the communication field (Sádaba, 2006). However, as Martín-Algarra and López Escobar argue, these approaches fit perfectly with the speech studies tradition, focused as the latter is on the study of the communicative phenomenon through the qualitative perspective of rhetoric (Martín-Algarra & López-Escobar, 1992, p. 450).

The present chapter focuses on the work of North American Kenneth Burke (1879–1993) for two reasons. First, during the 1930s, he was the first to study communication as a type of human action through a dramatistic prism. His contributions have influenced many subsequent authors, and he has become the most cited dramatistic author in communication studies.

Second, the Burkeian model offers an innovative perspective on communication study, one different from any other that the umbrella of communication theory may offer. Burke's approach is designed to study any human action, not only communication, and so it "provides a perspective that is different from that of the phenomenon and that, without being specific, turns out to be integrative." This proves very useful in view of the complexity of communicative actions (Martín-Algarra, 2003, p. 110).

Nevertheless, Burke is a prolific author and his writing is eclectic and complex; it goes well beyond what is reviewed in these pages. Burke's versatility and originality have always created a "conflict of interpretations" when his descriptions were applied to a specific theoretical school (Biesecker, 1997, p. 10). Brock recalls that the focus of Burke's concern "shifted from epistemology to ontology" in 1968. This would be the reason why it has always been difficult to reduce Burke's contributions "to a unified rhetorical system" (Brock, 1990, p. 183).

Some critics claim that Burke's writings emanate from Marxism, others from formalism, pluralism, structuralism, semiotics, or even post-structuralism. In any case, says Biesecker, such interpretations are not wholly wrong. They are different approaches to a very fruitful author, whose work embraces a full range perspectives – from that of the literary critic to those of theorists of social change, going through rhetorical analysis, philosophy, and logology (Biesecker, 1997, p. 10). Due to the extension and variety of scope of his writing, this chapter focuses only on those aspects of his work more directly linked to the application of his model to communication.

Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Theory

The starting point of Burke's thinking is "action" understood as a conscious and voluntary behavior that encloses a purpose, an intention. His focus is not on the external aspects of action but on the subjective meaning behind it, the intention inherent in any human purposive action, which confers a symbolic dimension to every act (Burke, 1969b).

Burke distinguishes between "action" and "motion" to explain his approach. "Motion" refers to the mere physical movement in animals, plants and things, which is lacking in purpose; on the other hand, "action," when linked to humans, involves intentional and voluntary behavior. Volition gives action a subjective meaning beyond that of the single external act. The study of "motion" would be merely "mechanical," whereas the study of "action" would be "dramatic" (Martín-Algarra & López-Escobar, 2003, p. 452).

In order to grasp the whole meaning of an action, it is necessary to discover its subjective aspect, the symbolic meaning every person gives his or her acts. According to Burke, the context, the stage, and the rest of the circumstances surrounding an action must be comprehended if one is to accomplish this. As Martín-Algarra and López-Escobar (1992, p. 425) explain, these aspects are the means of "setting the action on stage," as if it were "an element of a play." Burke believes this is the only way to identify and understand the motives behind any human action.

Therefore, if context and intention have to be taken into account to understand an action, "symbols become necessary, as they make public subjective meanings" (Sádaba, 2006, p. 153). Symbolic action is then the basis of Burkeian philosophy: according to Burke, the ability to create and use symbols is another feature that separates humans from animals.

According to this approach, then, humans are symbolic beings, as they perform voluntary and purposeful actions. Those actions create a universe of meanings and symbols that are shared among people and allow for a common understanding framework to be created. Thus Burke states that society is built through the exchange of symbols contained in human actions (Burke, 1968, p. 152).

However, a complete understanding Burke's dramatistic proposal for the study of human action requires becoming familiar with some other key concepts in his theory, such as "communication," "substance," "identification," and "rhetoric."

Basic concepts for understanding the Burkeian proposal

In Burke's model communication is important for its own sake: he considers it to be the symbolic action that builds society. In discussing communication, Burke uses several terms inseparable from this theme: "substance," "identification," and "rhetoric." Starting from them, he justifies the relevance of the communicative phenomenon as a society builder and as a means to convey purpose and intentions.

On the one hand, substance refers to the essence of things. In human beings, substance is the common nature that any two people share, as opposed to the culture and personality that each one may possess separately from the other. The more elements two people have in common, the more substance they will share and the higher the mutual understanding or consubstantiality they reach will be (Burke, 1969b; Littlejohn, 1989, p. 105).

On the other hand, as a consequence of this, any communication between two people will be the result of their consubstantiality – of the set of symbols they share, which make them understand each other. Communicative acts, then, contribute to

the process of overcoming the social division among people, because they enable the sharing of meanings and hence they lead to better mutual understanding. Due to communication, identification is gradually increased. The higher the degree of identification, the more fruitful the communication will be (Brock, 1990, pp. 183–195).

In Burkeian thinking, communication has not only this symbolic dimension but also a rhetorical one. By "rhetorical" Burke means that communicative acts seek an identification between speaker and listener. Through the purposeful transmission of symbols in a communicative act, the speaker attempts to draw the listener onto his or her discursive ground, so that the listener understands it and ends up sharing the speaker's ideas, agreeing with them, and contributing the content of his or her own speech. The first wants to persuade the second.

In Burke, however, persuasion is not the final aim of rhetoric; that aim is the reason why persuasion is used – namely to incite the other to a specific action or behavior. Therefore communication is something of a rhetorical nature, which uses language as a persuasive tool to achieve the exchange of symbolic actions, and this in turn increases the consubstantiality between speaker and listener with the purpose of inciting him or her to action (Burke, 1969a).

In this process of building society through communication, Burke identifies several stages that result in success or failure of these communicative interactions, as identification and agreement between two people are not necessarily always achieved. A communicative action can lead to acceptance of a person's invitation to share, or a decline to do so, according to Burke. These are the two possibilities for social interaction. If there is acceptance, then the social order – the hierarchy that structures society and makes it work – is maintained. However, rejection causes a disruption of social order, and generates a process of searching for a new order or for the reestablishment of the former one.

This process, which Burke calls "terms for order," explains the evolution of society and represents a symbolic dynamic, which describes every action taking place among people. Society goes through the stages of order, pollution of the order, and assignment of guilt, purification, and redemption (Burke, 1984, 1985). For Burke, the starting point of any social situation is order, and the motives behind any human action (as well as behind any communicative act) will be the result of an endless search for such order.

The "dramatistic pentad" model of analysis

The application of these concepts to the study of human action is systematized in Burke's methodological tool, the dramatistic pentad, an analytic model that defines the five elements which, for Burke, delimit every action, including the communicative ones. The pentad consists of the combination of the five aspects that define any drama or play: the agent, the act, the scene, the agency, and the purpose. The final aim of establishing this pattern is to allow for the understanding of the whole meaning behind any human action to be developed. In order to understand an

action and eventually the intention that has caused it, Burke dramatizes the action, setting it (as it were) on the stage.

Instead of highlighting one element, this pattern analyzes all of them equally, and also the relations between them, in order to achieve a joint and coordinated vision of the whole. This wider perspective allows for distinguishing the purpose – the symbolic meaning (Burke, 1969b). By understanding every single element and the connection between them, "action may acquire its meaning" (Martín-Algarra, 2003, p. 119). In this sense, Duncan indicates that Burke gives importance not only to the structure of any act, but also to the relation between the symbolic act and its context (Duncan, 1968, p. 18). This way the pentad yields the blocks for the building of our symbolic reality (Brock, 1990, p. 187).

As a consequence of this dramatistic idea of action, the scene becomes the starting point in Burke's model – its most important piece. This is one of the main originalities in Burkeian dramatistic theory: he substitutes "the setting of an action that usually begins in the actor for another starting in the scene," while the most common structure in the classical patterns for the study of communication has the subject as the center of it (Martín-Algarra, 2003, pp. 115–124).

The scene is, for Burke, all the aspects of the time and space axis, as well as other factors, such as cultural, social, political, and economic issues. The act is, then, what happens in the scene within which it acquires its symbolic meaning. The agent is the one who performs the action, being moved by his or her motives, inclinations, culture, history, education, idiosyncrasies … his or her substance, in short. The intentional load of any action is hidden here.

Agency is needed. It can be supplied, for example, by physical tools, by any institution involved, by the strategies deployed to achieve it, or by the communication channels employed. These means always respond to the purpose behind the action. Choosing one means or another is a key factor in identifying the subjective meaning of an act, since every act implies purposefulness and awareness of how things are done (Canel, 2007, p. 51).

Aside from the novel approach based on this scene-centered model definition, the main feature of the model is balance. Martín-Algarra and López-Escobar assert that the pentad "is a tool to equally analyze every element of a drama and the relations among them … as it demands a coordinate and joint view of the whole" (1992, p. 461). For Canel, the leading contribution of the Burkeian standard is that "it covers all of the elements involved in communication processes with all their richness," overcoming the unidirectionality of many classical models of communication (Canel, 2007, p. 61). Burke, who understands that every element of the pentad has an influence on and conditions the others, offers the possibility to relate all the parts and to study them from a unified perspective, in an attempt to give them a more complete sense.

Furthering this integrative nature, Burke's highly versatile pattern pays heed to the fact that the same element may play different roles, depending on the prism through which an action is observed: action may become the agency, or the scene the purpose, for example. This allows for an approach to the study of communication that is

different from other analytical models, as it provides a more open framework, which offers many possibilities of interpretation. There is no unique sense.

This characteristic makes the dramatistic pentad especially useful for the study of the complexity that communicative actions enclose most of the time. According to Birdsell, "different pentadic formulations may be possible within the same text, each contributing to the ultimate interpretation of the text in a different but equally valuable way." He concludes that critics have to go for the widest application of the pentad in order to "find the most consistent or the most illuminating explanation for a given text or event" (Birdsell, 1990, pp. 208–209).

The dramatistic pentad in not, then, a closed method of analysis, as there exist numerous ways of interpreting the same text or moment. This is to say that the dramatistic pentad does not provide the substance of a speech, act, or situation. However, it gives a thinking structure to guide researchers' attention to those transformation points that are landmarks in identifying motives and purposes. The pentad is also an ambiguous tool, since it does not lead to correct or incorrect readings of an action (all of them are valid). This feature confers even more relevance to critics' interpretations, which must be compared until the most consistent version is found (Birdsell, 1990, pp. 208–209).

Bridges between Dramatistic Theory and Communication Studies

As has already been explained, Burkeian dramatistic theory is not a communication theory per se, but an action theory. Communication can be considered a part of action, certainly; but it is not the main, let alone the only, object of study. But, like any other human action, communication plays the singular role of being the specific kind of action that builds society.

Although there is a clear connection between Burke's theory and the communicative phenomenon, Burke does not study communication directly. In order to become familiar with some of the applications of his dramatistic proposal to communication studies (and thereafter to tackle the analysis of the 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid), it is necessary to pay attention to the contributions of other authors whose work builds bridges between Burke's thinking and communication research.

If Burke is the dramatistic theorist most cited in the field of communication, it becomes essential to approach those authors who update and widen his thinking by "translating" his dramatistic perspective or prism so as to make it relevant to the understanding of any field within communication studies.

It makes sense, then, that the scholars who have done this should be among the academics who have casted Burke's dramatistic theory into communicative terms. However, they are not the only ones who have undertaken this translation task. In fact they have been chosen for a presentation here because their work, linking as it does the Burkeian approach to communication, can be particularly useful in building a dramatistic understanding of crisis communication – the particular communicative

area that offers a better insight into the suggested case study: the 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spain.

It is taken for granted that a bombing of the magnitude of this one can be easily identified as a crisis, since it caused a death toll of almost 200 people, drove an electoral campaign to a standstill, and paralyzed a whole country for days, as will be discussed later. The communication scene that this situation generated (for the media as well as for the government that had to give a public response to the attack) fits crisis communication postulates, as it becomes a communication in an emergency, chaotic, and shocking context.

The authors whose work complements Burke's in this case are Hugh D. Duncan, Robert L. Heath, Petter M. Smudde, and Robert M. Entman. First, Duncan highlights the relevance of communication as an authority conveyor and a legitimating device for any social hierarchy. Second, Heath gives a dramatistic definition of what a crisis is – that is, he creates the basic framework for understanding the role of communication in such situations from a Burkeian perspective. Third, Smudde organizes the use of the dramatistic pentad in the study of any public communications strategy, including the one deployed when a crisis occurs. And, finally, Entman specifies the key role the mass media perform in any crisis context and their influence on the evolution of critical moments.

Duncan: Authority's legitimation through communication

Duncan's (1968) view of human relations is based on the Burkeian idea of symbolic communication as a society builder and stimulator. He asserts that human relations are hierarchical and that hierarchy is kept through communication. Members in a society communicate through symbols that they think create and maintain the order established by the hierarchy. Any community, in Duncan's proposal, originates and exists in the continuous fight for order. Society's drama is, then, the authority's drama – the fight, among those who have the power or seek it, to control the symbols that sustain the social order.

Although Duncan adopts a sociological focus to approach the study of human relations, in his view communication plays a prior role in society and in the maintenance of its order. If authority wants to be legitimized, there are some rules, laws, and traditions that must be respected. The kind of authority that people lower down on the scale of social hierarchy trust and respect relies on fair play, on the equitable and unbiased exercise of its own competences.

To legitimate itself, authority needs to be aware of its public dimension, which is deployed through communication. A public leader's image, the type of audiences the leader has and the ways they are dealt with, give valuable clues about what the principles invoked in the name of social order are and how authority works. Dramatization of authority must then be communicable. If authority is conveyed and legitimized through communication, those who control the creation of images and symbols used in that daily communication with the citizen body will control society as a whole (Duncan, 1962).

Duncan updates Burke's thinking in communicative terms, since he asserts that communication is the essential vehicle to reach and maintain the legitimation of authority in society. Communication builds society, as it helps to keep the social structure and the symbols upon which it is erected.

If this dramatization of authority must be communicated on a regular basis in order for society to be maintained, the process will become even more necessary in situations of crisis. During a crisis it is necessary to communicate authority and legitimacy because, if social relations and hierarchy are not clearly conveyed, any authority that an organization may have delegitimizes itself (Duncan, 1968). The role of communication will be decisive, since in a crisis the legitimacy of authority is at stake – its ability to resolve the crisis and return to normality (Nacos, 1990).

Heath: Crisis as rhetorical exigencies

According to Heath, "a crisis event constitutes a rhetorical exigency that requires one or more responsible parties to enact control in the face of uncertainty in an effort to win key publics' confidence and meet their ethical standards." In addition, he states that "a crisis … challenges the ability of the organization to enact the narrative of continuity through constructive change to control the organization's destiny." Therefore, from a dramatistic perspective, "control assumes order. People desire order and predictability that lead to positive rather than negative outcomes" (Heath, 2004, pp. 167–168). At this point Heath justifies the relation between crisis and communication:

> This search for order is a rhetorical exigency; it takes the form and substance of a narrative, a series of statements that is expected to present a factually accurate, coherent, and probable account for the event and its proper solution. (Heath, 2004, p. 168)

Burke's influence is obvious here. Heath asserts that crisis means the breaking of an existing order; thus he connects with the Burkeian terms for order that build social life. Moreover, this author goes further and explains that a crisis can be understood as the breaking of a narrative, the disruption of the habitual dramatization or routine story of an organization. Every human life and the life of any organization have a usual narrative, one that characterizes their average daily existence. This routine can be specified with the help of the elements of the dramatistic pentad (actors, acts, scene, agency, and purpose) that defines that narrative. When something breaks that order, drastically altering any of the elements of the pentad that constitutes that usual narrative, a crisis takes place giving birth to a new narrative – the narrative of the crisis.

There has been, in other words, a pollution of the order, a disruption of the usual narrative. Thus the process of searching for a new order or of achieving a return to order begins. If there is a change in the usual narrative, the situation needs to be explained. Crisis means pollution of the order; it imposes a rhetorical exigency, because something has happened that forces those responsible to fulfill

their public and moral duty of giving an open explanation of the crisis and a statement of how it is going to be resolved. Duncan's idea of dramatization of authority through communication is somehow included here and transferred to crisis situations.

So a crisis imposes an exigency if the society and those in control of it want the crisis to come to an end; and this exigency is also rhetorical because a crisis narrative needs to be expressed in words. The search for a new order – in other words, the crisis resolution process – acquires the form of a new story that has to be verbally told. If a narrative is to be explained, it must take the form of a rhetorical statement, which means that public speeches and messages must be provided.

Public statements are the best mechanism to reach all types of audience directly or indirectly affected by a crisis, and thus the only way to achieve Burkeian consubstantiality or identification with these audiences – or, in Heath's words, to "win key publics' confidence and meet their ethical standards" (Heath, 2004, p. 168). Those responsible for dealing with a crisis must show control and a desire, shared with their audiences, to return to order. If they want this message to reach different audiences effectively, crisis resolution will require public statements; this is its rhetorical exigency.

In this process of getting the messages across, mass media play a key role. Dramatization of authority in a society has a more than evident public dimension, hence the scene where this play takes place is the public sphere. This means that the media are essential to shaping those public statements and, as a consequence, to winning key publics and returning to the order.

Entman: The role of the media in framing a crisis

Entman's work on framing theory can also contribute to building a bridge between Burkeian dramatistic theory and communication. While his contributions do not stem from dramatism, connections to Burke's proposal can be clearly found. Entman's ideas on the role of the media in the construction of society perfectly match – and widen – the Burkeian understanding of a progression of social life through communication.

Entman proposes the cascade metaphor for a pattern designed to interpret the impact that messages of the political elites (those on top of the social hierarchy) have in society. The objective is to explain who wins the struggle for influencing what Entman calls the stratified cascade of the political system. His "cascading activation model" is constructed by five actors, top down: the government, other political elites, mass media, news texts, and the public (Entman, 2004).

The model indicates that the interpretation of certain events promoted from the upper levels downward depends on the frame used for that interpretation and on the flux of ideas that mix with the original message as the cascade progresses in its course. As the message goes down, it is modified by all those who receive it.

Cultural congruence, according to Entman, "measures the ease with which – all else being equal – a news frame can cascade through the different levels of the framing

process and stimulate similar reactions at each step" (Entman, 2004, p. 14). The more congruent the frame is with the schemas that dominate culture, the more success it will enjoy and the more capacity it will have to arouse reactions of support and agreement among people. Conversely, if the frame is culturally incongruent with a society's culture, it will provoke a reaction of rejection among the citizenry, producing a kind of short-circuit. This happens in ambiguous situations such as crises, which, being judged within the same mental parameters, can receive opposite interpretations.

A message originating at the upper level of the cascade (the hierarchy of society) loses its effectiveness in ambiguous situations or crises. As there is no clear frame to explain it, political elites and journalists enact opposing interpretations. The gap left by the absence of a culturally congruent frame is fulfilled by discrepant voices that support different frames, each struggling to influence another. Critical discourses may reach the same strength as the official ones, in what Entman calls a "frame parity" situation. In this case the social response becomes unpredictable, since people receive opposing messages at the same time.

It may be suggested that Entman updates two aspects of Burke's proposal. On the one hand, when he refers to cultural congruence, he applies the Burkeian concepts of substance, consubstantiality, and identification to the political system and to frame spreading. On the other, as has already been remarked, Entman underlines the relevant role of mass media in the progression of social life, which increases as the events become more ambiguous. If the interpretations that reporters collect from their sources are different among them, the news frame will be less biased. In this situation the media and the journalists will have the last word on what interpretation they are going to promote.

Aside from the relevance of the media, there are other tools than can be used to effectively convey a general communication strategy in order to promote a certain interpretation of facts, to communicate successfully, and to respond to a crisis. Such a tool is the dramatistic pentad, which is explained as follows.

Smudde: Pentadic dissection of communicative actions

The Burkeian dramatistic pentad has been used in the study of a specific communicative action. This can be seen in Smudde, who applies this analysis model to the study of public relations. Following Burke, he understands public relations as a symbolic action, and any issues that matter to an organization and its publics are "literal dramas that have scenes, acts, agents, agencies and purposes" (Smudde, 2004, p. 421). As a result, he suggests the application of the Burkeian method to solve any situation in professional public relations.

In Burke, every communicative action is a symbolic act that has a purpose, and all five elements of the pentad must be considered if that purpose is to be discovered. The pentadic tool can be usefully applied not only to a general communication strategy, says Smudde (2004, pp. 430–432), but also to every single text, statement, or audiovisual message transmitted during a crisis. Consequently, the possibility to translate crisis communication into dramatistic terms is open.

Every message can be analyzed and defined according to the actor, the act, the scene, the agency, and the purpose. A general communication plan will then be the result of the sum of the individual pentads. If one adopts this model, a crisis communication strategy would be more precise, as the model would specify and update the elements that must define a written message or a spoken statement. There will be not only a wider general strategy, but also, within it, a specific strategy for each communicative action; and the latter will be developed through the pentadic mechanism. If this suggestion becomes a working routine for those responsible for the communication, it will grant them the ability to adapt themselves to the highly changing circumstances of a crisis much faster and with more flexibility than if there were only one general strategy.

Furthermore, the pentad as a tool is also useful in discovering audience perceptions and so can help design a communication plan centered on perceived aspects of a crisis. This can be done by taking into account the different audiences' pentads when an organization is about to define its own, either for a general communication strategy or for a particular text or statement. It is necessary for the organization to try to predict what other actors can say or do and how it can alter its message. If this prediction is developed with the pentadic tools, the organization will be able to counteract beforehand all those elements that can pollute its message.

One of the most effective crisis management resources is the proactive listening and answering of public concerns in order to legitimize authority and maintain social order, a two-way communication that permits mutual knowledge – the sharing of substance. The dramatistic pentad enters a crisis communication area as a mechanism to systematize audiences' perceptions and thereby to help a given message to be consistent and able to match those perceptions, in other words to achieve the consubstantiality or identity it needs in order to succeed and contribute to the end of the crisis.

If the pentad is used both for defining every text and for outlining perceptions of crisis, the organization gets to analyze crisis situations from different points of view, but with the same code. This would make it easier to detect similarities and discrepancies (the existing gap) among a wide range of speeches that enter the public arena in a period of crisis and would allow for an adaptation of the organization's pentad to the pentads of the audiences. When corporate interests address the public in the public's own terms, it becomes easier for these interests to persuade the public and incite it to a particular action they desire.

This way the pentad becomes a rhetorical tool that works through the combination of its elements; more importance may be given to one of them if these interests want to focus attention on it. The organization can underline one element at the expense of another so as to highlight the aspect it wants to persuade audiences about (Smudde, p. 2004). Combining the five elements ethically allows the organization to frame the crisis the way it wants and promote the interpretation more favorable to its interests while always being loyal to the truth.

To sum up, Smudde brings the dramatistic pentad up to date when he applies it to the practice of public relations. By doing so, he organizes a methodology for the

study of individual communicative actions that allows its users to outline how a message is designed with the final aim of adapting it to the surrounding scene.

Grosso modo, the contributions of the four authors reviewed here help transfer the Burkeian proposal to the comprehension of a very specific area within communication studies: crisis communication. Consequently it can be said that these authors update the dramatistic approach and help interpret any critical situation in the light of a revisited Burkeian model.

In this sense, these ideas can be well understood as a focus of attention for scholars: they orient research in the study of a specific crisis situation. In an inductive way, the theoretical contributions gathered here may constitute a kind of a qualitative analysis methodology for case studies. The updating of the Burkeian dramatistic theory from these four angles can be intuitively applied to the study of any crisis situation when one is searching for an answer to these general research questions: How did the government enact authority through communication? Did the dramatization of authority, through its communicative response, contribute to the re-establishment of order and to its own legitimation? What pentadic definition of the crisis could be identified in the communication strategy? Was that definition consistent with the pentadic definitions that key publics held? How did the media's role during the crisis influence the achievement of consubstantiality and identification between authority and the rest of society, and how could that role condition the return to order?

Case Study: The 2004 Madrid Terrorist Attacks

At this point it seems appropriate to apply this dramatistic perspective to a case study: the crisis caused by the terrorist attacks suffered in Madrid on March 11, 2004. First, a case study would serve to illustrate how this proposed qualitative methodology works. Second, it could allow for a better understanding of what happened in those convulsed days, which represented Spain's main security, social, and political crisis in modern democratic times.

The analysis will pivot, then, around the aspects through which Burke's dramatistic theory has been revisited. The aim is just to give a brief illustration of the theoretical approach proposed in this chapter. What follows is not a detailed dissection of what happened during those days; that would take too long to study and is not the objective of this research. So only some aspects of the crisis will be presented, namely those that are most relevant to understanding how Burke's pentad can be applied and how it was extended by the four authors reviewed above.

On Thursday, March 11, 2004, Spain was in the middle of an electoral campaign to renew its parliament and to choose a new prime minister. The election day was to be the 14th (four days after the crisis, as it turned out). This crisis, known as the 3/11 terrorist attack, took place at the end of the second term of the Popular Party, which was characterized by increasing social dissatisfaction and protest due to some controversial government decisions. The social and political atmosphere was tense,

so the campaign developed in a climate of growing confrontation. Most of the pre-electoral opinion polls forecast a likely technical tie between the governing party, the right-wing Popular Party, and its main opponent, the left-wing Socialist Party (PSOE). On that black morning, 13 bombs exploded in the metro-rail system of the capital city, Madrid, at a time when most of the commuters were taking their trains to get to work; 191 people died and more than 1,500 were injured.

Since the 1950s, Spain had suffered terrorism from the ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Homeland and Freedom). This was a kind of political violence linked to a separatist group in the Basque Country, a region in the northern part of the country. With more than 800 mortal victims, ETA terrorism had become one of the main concerns for any government in Spain and for the whole democratic society. Electoral campaigns of any kind were in fact one of the scenes in which these terrorists committed their crimes.

This is the political and social context that would work as a basic guideline to understand the Spanish government's dramatization of authority through communication, the role of the media in this crisis, the social reaction and electoral behavior on the election day, and the outcome of the crisis: a defeat of the Popular Party in the elections and the rise of the Socialist Party.

The Spanish government's pentad and its mismanagement of perceptions

Two people were in charge of providing the public statements on behalf of the government after the explosions and until the election day. They were the then chief of the executive, José María Aznar, and the home office minister, Ángel Acebes. Acebes' office had the authority to deal with terrorism issues.

The home office minister first addressed the nation six hours after the explosion of the bombs, and that was the first time when the government's "pentad" appeared – in other words, when the ruling party framed the attacks. In the name of the government, he interpreted the explosion as a terrorist act, committed by an ETA terrorist group to disrupt the electoral campaign scene, with the only purpose to damage the current government by exploding 13 bombs in four trains of the metro-rail system of Madrid during the morning rush hour.

Evidence of the act, the agency, and the scene were clear. However, it was not so obvious who the actor was – who was responsible for the attacks – and therefore what motivations lay behind the massacre. First, the police investigation had just begun and there was at yet no conclusive proof of any person's or organization's guilt. Second, Spanish society already had in mind the words of several actors who, during the hours before the attack, had pointed at Islamic terrorism as likely responsible for any upcoming events of this sort. The main reason for doubt regarding responsibility for the bombing was the fact that such an indiscriminate terrorist action did not fit the ETA's *modus operandi*. Therefore the pentadic definition the government provided for the crisis was apparently not fully consistent with the evidence available.

For this reason, the government's message started losing effectiveness from the very beginning. The two realities mentioned above – the pólice reports and the reports from attackers – led to the questioning of the government's explanations from the very first minute of their public appearance. This situation meant that other political elites, some media, and an important part of Spanish society framed the bombing with another pentad. There were different views due to opposite pentadic interpretations.

As has been explained, if an organization is to meet its publics' standards and to enact its authority and legitimacy in order to re-establish order and lead those publics out of the problems, it has to listen proactively to other possible pentads, to other likely interpretations of the crisis. In short, any government has to pay attention to the different perceptions of the crisis, as the crisis will only be really solved when it is closed in the public mind. Furthermore, the consubstantiality and identification between different layers in any social hierarchy can only be achieved during a crisis if there has been a previous work of legitimation through the exercise of government authority, in a daily effort to create a common ground with the public in order to gain its confidence and loyalty. If this has not been developed, it will be almost impossible to end any crisis without losing the audience's confidence. It is very likely that the public would perceive the organization as unable to enact, during the crisis, a narrative of continuity that may restore the order, because the organization has not made that effort previously and has not prepared itself or its public to come together in critical moments.

In this sense, the Spanish government staged perception mismanagement. First of all, its public image, reputation, and popularity in Spanish society were at a low point. During its second term in the executive branch, the Popular Party had suffered several crises that it had not been able to manage properly, mainly in relation to communication and information policies and strategies. The government had not completely accomplished the communication transparency required of any democratic government. Crises such as demonstrations against the Iraq War, the outbreak of mad cow disease, the sinking of the *Prestige* oil tanker close to the northwestern Spanish coast and the resulting ecological catastrophe, the Yakolev 42 military airplane crash in Turkey, or the invasion of the Perejil islet, among others, were not well managed and progressively undermined the Spanish society's confidence in the government, which various opinion polls reflected. These crises also tarnished the reputation of a government that paid scant heed to people's concerns and protests and was unable to enact a fluid and effective communication with them.

When the terrorist attacks occurred on March 11, the government's image and social confidence were already weakened. All those previous crises were signals that, if something more serious happened, the government was not ready to face it because it no longer enjoyed support from a part of the society. A death toll of 191 people was a crisis that the Spanish government could not overcome. During its term it had not fully developed its listening and answering skills, so, in the midst of such a crisis, it was too late to do it. Its public statements and addresses to the

nation underlined its own pentad, overlooking other pentads. This does not mean that it had to change its pentad, but that it needed to try to show that other pentads were taken into account at the time of defining what had happened.

The government could not enact a narrative of continuity because it was months since it had paid much attention to other political elites, the media, and society's perceptions. It was not well aware of the increasing dissatisfaction in the political and social climate. It had not developed the communication skills required to understand its context, and so it had no real authority in the Spanish social hierarchy. The consequence was that it enacted a narrative of crisis but not a continuous one, because there were very few things before the March 11 crisis that smoothed the way to a return to the previous order. Perhaps the previous situation was already one of disorder. The final result was the creation of a new situation, with a new authority in the social system.

Burkeian rhetoric of government: Persuasion and incitement to action

In this context, the president of the government called upon the whole Spanish society to take part, the following day, March 12, in a demonstration designed to condemn the terrorist attacks under the slogan "With the victims, with the constitution, against terrorism." This was the rhetorical icon of the government. With this slogan, on one hand it tried to persuade the Spanish society that its interpretation of the crisis was correct, that it knew what was at stake at that moment. The slogan was the government's most direct message, the one that best crossed the cascade from government to citizens. On the other hand, it incited people to a double action: it asked them not only to attend demonstrations all over the country, but also to support the elections, because two out of the three entities mentioned in the slogan – terrorism and the constitution – had been hot issues during the electoral campaign, both for the political parties and for the mass media.

As has been explained, the ultimate aim of Burke's rhetoric is to achieve the highest possible degree of consubstantiality, that is, to reach identification between an organization and its audience. But this is only accomplished if the rhetoric is based on culturally congruent elements and arguments. The public only reacts the way an organization wants if the organization has met the public's ethical standards, if what is being suggested makes sense in terms of the public's way of understanding community life, if it is coherent with the narrative that allows maintain social order. If not, as Entman argued, there is a blockade and a rejection of the organization's proposal, with the consequence that the public's loyalty is lost. This creates a gap separating the different "substances."

The Spanish government did not develop the needed tools to understand the substance of the other actors, to get to know their perceptions, their interpretations and pentads. As it did not have a grasp on these, its message and its general communication strategy pointed in the wrong direction and met all the requirements for a frame culturally incongruent with the other political elites, with most

of the mass media, and with the greatest part of the society. In short, the reigning dissatisfaction that the government was unable to detect made the governmental message seem culturally incongruent. This is the reason why the electoral scene changed drastically after the elections.

Mistakes in authority and legitimacy communication

During its second term, due to its mismanagement of the mentioned crises, the Spanish government had lost control of the symbols that it had previously shared with the majority of society. The government's pentad of the political and social situation in Spain did not match those of other political elites and of half of the citizenry. However, the problem increased, because the executive branch had the perception of still being in control of the symbols that had granted it authority and legitimacy. It was still thinking that it was playing an important part in the joint creation of the order.

Actually, by the time of the terrorist attacks, the government controlled neither the symbols nor the social order, because it was unable to manage social perceptions. So it was incapable of realizing that a bigger crisis was impending. Its perception of promoting a culturally congruent frame was radically out of touch with reality: its frame was actually incongruent with most of the society. Somehow, on March 11, the government displayed the same shortcoming: it confused reality with perceptions. On one hand it did not pay enough attention to social reality, on the other hand it thought that its perception of life in Spain was the reality. It was wrong on both counts.

This huge distance between reality and perceptions was the main reason for the government's ineffective efforts to communicate its authority and its legitimacy during the second term of office. The government and the governed were enacting different plays, so it was impossible for them to reach consubstantiation. The starting point in the definition of the situation was wrong, and so it was always going to be perceived that way by people. As a consequence, the government communicated a wrongly understood "play" and society progressively removed its confidence and support. While the government thought that it was co-creating the order, it was actually widening that distance between incompatible substances.

The same happened on March 11. Although police investigations began uncovering evidence that the author of the attack was an Islamic terrorist, both Aznar and Acebes insisted that the ETA-actor pentad was the most likely one. From the very first sign that Islamic terrorism was behind the bombings, most of the media made public their doubts about the definition of the crisis that the government was dramatizing through communication. The media's widespread indication of the possibility of another pentadic definition of the crisis was more consistent with police findings. And citizens started thinking about the implications of one or another pentad.

The "actor" element of this terrorist attack crisis pentad was the key to interpreting the whole situation. In that particular electoral context, if the actor were the ETA, the Popular Party would became the most likely winner, as the fight against

this terrorist group was one of its landmark policies. However, if the actor behind the bombings were Al Qaeda (or another Islamic terrorist group), the Socialist Party would enhance it chances to reach victory, as the Spanish support for the US President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq had put Spain in the center of Al Qaeda's threats. This probability would put the Popular Party in a very delicate situation. This was the actor in the pentad that could completely change the scene of the crisis and its definition.

The government's perception of ETA as author of the attack remained strong, provoking in society a reaction of doubt. The executive rhetoric, conveyed through the demonstration slogan, fed social doubts. Citizens began thinking that there was a clear intention behind that specific message: promoting the interpretation of ETA as actor could signal an attempt on the part of the government to win the public to its side, and thereby win the elections. Social perceptions of the executive's pentad during those four days implied the identification of a supposed (and possibly self-serving and false) purpose. As the electoral results showed, the dramatization of the government's authority during the crisis led to the government's delegitimation after all. Since March 14 the Popular Party has occupied the opposition bench in the Spanish parliament.

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10

Ritual Theory and the Media

John J. Pauly

Since the 1970s, a body of intellectual work has emerged within media studies that could be characterized as ritual theory. This work does not share a single intellectual origin. Some of it proposes to use older anthropological theories of ritual to analyze modern media artifacts and practices; some invokes ritual as a form of resistance to a media research establishment dominated by positivist, administrative, or quantitative research; some seeks to understand the role of media ritual in political life; some attempts to constitute ritual as a theoretical category with its own integrity and value; some probes media ritual in order to understand the cognitive structures it supports or the ideological balance of power it sustains. What all this work shares, however, is an insistence that we place the study of human meaning making at the center of our theories of communication media. Ritual theories focus upon how society is symbolically connected, constituted, and called into existence, in a way that makes the social order manifest, palpable, and actionable. Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle (1999, p. 130) have argued that, in their deepest form, "[r]ituals create and control experience by re-enacting the creation of the world."

This chapter explores the origins of ritual theories of the media, focusing on work done since the 1970s more than on earlier studies in anthropology and sociology – which, while suggestive and important to the emergence of this recent tradition, did not explicitly focus on communication media. The chapter begins with a discussion of the key components of ritual and of the reasons why the concept of ritual might prove attractive to scholars studying modern communication media. It then identifies several key moments in the development of ritual theory: James Carey's seminal comparison of transmission and ritual models of communication; the interest in the ritual role that media play in politics, as discussed in the

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work of Philip Elliott, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, Karin Becker, and Marvin and Ingle; the effort by Eric Rothenbuhler to frame a more general theory of ritual communication; and recent efforts by Nick Couldry to understand how the ritual construction of "the media" affirms the system of power relations in society. The chapter concludes with a brief suggestion as to how one might continue to draw upon ritual theory to understand communication media, or even to influence their professional practices.

Key Elements of Media Ritual

Everyone who studies ritual tends to agree on some taken-for-granted key features that distinguish it from other forms of human activity. By definition, rituals are repeated or habitual. They gain their significance and importance from being re-enacted in the same form, time and again, in a particular situation. Anthropologists have documented a wide range of such activities in traditional societies – from celebrations of birth, marriage, and death to rites of passage that punctuate transitions from childhood to adulthood. Rituals thus tend to mark special rather than routine moments in the life of an individual or a society; they symbolize the passage from one state to another, in ways that make that passage memorable and public.

Rituals are also formalized. Their precise form matters and their significance rests upon the shared understandings of a larger group that leads the individual through the same ceremony, at the same life moment, with the same expected result. A ritual simultaneously draws the individual into the orbit of group experience and publicly celebrates the beliefs and ethical principles that bind that group. The word *formalized* also refers to the fact that rituals have a prescribed liturgy; a particular class of person conducts them, they follow a familiar script in their performance, they must be held at a specific time and place, and they elicit an appropriate style of response from the participants.

Although we sometimes use the word *ritual* to refer to a casually repeated everyday action (for example, getting a cup of coffee on the way to work each morning), scholars think that the most important rituals point to humans' understanding of the sacred or ineffable aspects of their experience. Not surprisingly, much of the early interest in ritual came out of the study of religions, which seek to display their sense of the transcendent. A religious ritual not only declares the world mysterious and wondrous, but visibly enacts that mystery in order to induce a sense of wonder. In a funeral ceremony, for example, the ritual literally ushers the deceased from one state of being to another. For religious believers, rituals give participants access to the sacred in a way that would not have been possible in the absence of the ceremony. Anthropologists have noted the connection between ritual and magic; both produce the change they describe. At one moment the participant in a puberty rite is a girl; in the next, she is declared a woman. Many scholars believe that the most meaningful and powerful rituals are always embodied (Marvin, 2006). Ritual puts the physical body into motion or sets it to rhythm, cloaks it, decorates or even

disfigures it, and places it in the company of other bodies. The ritual thus reveals its underlying authority by commanding bodies in prescribed ways.

Ceremonial activities would signify nothing were they not given a shared dramatic form and larger social meaning. A great deal of scholarly discussion has focused upon what the symbols and ceremonies of ritual can or cannot do. Sometimes, when confronted with the magical or religious ceremonies of traditional peoples, nineteenth-century anthropologists would attribute the rituals to superstition, seeing them as savage or primitive, evidence of a lack of intellectual sophistication or ignorance of more modern scientific knowledge and methods. A subsequent generation of twentieth-century anthropologists softened these harsh cultural judgments and suggested that rituals were rational in their effects because they served a functional purpose, such as creating a sense of solidarity in society or ameliorating individual psychological fears or uncertainty. The ritual studies of the last 40 years have turned away from both these traditions, dismissing the cultural biases of the first and challenging the functionalist assumptions of the second. This recent scholarship treats rituals as cultural performances that can only be understood by taking their symbolism seriously.

Discussions of the efficacy of ritual inevitably return to a few key questions. Critics observe that some members of a community (and not others) are charged with conducting a ceremony, and this assignment of cultural authority leads to questions about the origin and legitimacy of such arrangements. Such scholars further note that, while the meticulously prescribed details of a ritual are often lovingly arranged, ceremonial work ultimately establishes a totem order of social, political, and economic power. Similarly, because rituals follow a highly choreographed form, they ask how that form came to be and whether ritual should be considered another word for tradition, or whether participants sometimes play with rather than just obey rituals. Where traditional analyses argued that ritual's purpose was to affirm consensus and build solidarity in the society, more recent scholars have asked whether ritual in fact allows sometimes for alternative or subversive meanings, or even expressions of conflict and difference. Finally, the discussion inevitably returns to the nature of symbolic power: do symbols merely point to or reflect a reality beyond themselves, or do they also create the very reality they purport only to represent?

This overview begins to suggest similarities between modern media of communication and the ceremonies of traditional societies, and the reasons why contemporary scholars might plausibly seek to develop ritual theories of the media. Societies of all sorts have long celebrated religious holidays, often tied to the seasons of year or to memorable historical events, but the invention of printing technology would afford new means to standardize, mechanize, and distribute cultural materials. Printing made possible the "periodical" – a noun that came into the English language in the early nineteenth century to describe magazines or newspapers published on a regular schedule. Even as seriality invited comparison with traditional rituals, however, the routine production, circulation, and consumption of print introduced new cultural complications: the creation of new rhythms of everyday

life; a redefinition of the social spaces in which readers dwelled; the emergence of new types of professional communicators, new audiences, and new styles of storytelling; and a widened sense of the economic, political, and social power enabled by regular, widespread communication. In this sense, ritual theories of the media invite us to reflect upon profound historical changes in our social and political institutions as well as in our habits of everyday communication.

James Carey and the Ritual Model

Many scholars cite James Carey's 1975 essay "A Cultural Approach to Communication" (republished in Carey, 1989) as establishing the possibility and value of a ritual model of communication for American media studies. The purpose of that essay, however, was not so much to develop a ritual model as to widen and deepen the scholarly conversation about communication by suggesting what he thought was missing in conventional accounts of the role of mass media in American society. Carey wanted to reshape the existing discourse on the media to a different set of purposes. He settled upon the term *ritual* as a matter of convenience, as much for narrative as for theoretical reasons – that is, in order to find something in the common experience of his readers that would dramatize the value of the cultural approach he was advocating. Carey never identified himself as a theorist of the ritual, although over the course of his many essays from the 1970s to the 1990s he would reference that term occasionally in his analyses of journalism and media. His most focused and powerful examination of ritual as a theoretical concept would come in his analysis (Carey, 1998) of the 1987 Robert Bork Supreme Court confirmation hearings as an example of a political degradation ceremony – an essay written in counterpoint to the work of Dayan and Katz (1992) on media events as political ritual.

Carey's essay begins by quoting a curious comment by the American philosopher John Dewey, that "of all things, communication is the most wonderful," and Dewey's subsequent observation that "society exists in communication," as suggested by the shared linguistic origin of the words *communication*, *community*, *communion*, and *common* (Carey, 1989, pp. 11, 15). Carey interprets Dewey's claims as a response to American encounters with the new industrial technologies of communication in the nineteenth century. The steam-powered printing press and the telegraph, in particular, had fostered two competing metaphors to describe that era's communication revolution: communication as transmission and communication as ritual. The two were not completely opposed, Carey emphasizes, for both could trace their origins to a religious impulse: transmission as the spreading of God's word, ritual as the ceremonial affirmation of the sacred. Indeed, although he did not say it bluntly in the essay, Carey was placing in opposition a common intellectual interpretation of Protestantism as a tradition built upon literacy and Bible reading and one of Catholicism as a tradition built upon ceremony and custom. Americans' development of models of communication was, for Carey, an

exercise in sense making, an attempt to discern the import of the new media technologies by using these competing cultural vocabularies.

The transmission model, Carey argues, treats the act of communication as the transportation of a message from a sender to a receiver. The ritual model treats it as "the sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality" (Carey, 1989, p. 15). Ritual, as a way of metaphorically imagining modern media systems, led Carey to propose a cultural approach to communication: "Communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed" (Carey, 1989, p. 19; and, he would add in later formulations, "celebrated"). His definition of communication (which does not itself use the term *ritual*) has powerfully influenced many scholars, for it pointed to an aspect of media experience that others had noticed but never adequately named. From the 1920s to the 1960s, American scholarship on media had been dominated by versions of the transmission model – who says what to whom, by what means, with what effect. That theoretical formulation had in turn dictated the methodologies used to study media. Researchers had typically attempted to quantify message effects by isolating one or another variable in the model, such as the influence of different speakers on perceived credibility, the impact of different modes of transmission, or the variant uses that different receivers made of the messages sent to them. The language of transmission, Carey argues, had come to dominate our imagination of the communication process and of mass media as social and political institutions. Public discussions of news, for example, were likely to describe it as a form of information and to value its ability to reduce signaling time, liberate individuals through the application of new technologies, and flatten the world's cultural differences. For Carey, these claims all rested upon an assumption that communication is best treated as transmission – a means of transporting messages from one place to another with maximum speed and optimum effect.

Carey thought that a ritual model would lead us to a different set of observations and questions and that the dominance of the transmission model in public discourse had in fact obscured the cultural consequences of media technology. He took those cultural consequences to be paramount, for he believed that, when humans communicate, they call society into existence and invite themselves to dwell in a symbolic order that they have themselves created. This quest for meaning defines us as a species, Carey argued, and our models of communication "create what we disingenuously pretend they merely describe" (Carey, 1989, p. 25). Thus the choice of a model of communication was not a matter of methodological convenience or personal taste. If a transmission model had come to dominate Americans' understanding of the media, then that model had obscured as much as it revealed:

> when we think about society we are almost always coerced by our traditions into seeing it as a network of power, administration, decision, and control – as a political order. Alternatively, we have seen society essentially as relations of property, production, and trade – an economic order.

What is missing from this account, Carey said, is any attention to the world of "aesthetic experience, religious ideas, personal values and sentiments, and intellectual notions" (Carey, 1989, p. 27), the symbolic worlds from which humans construct their sense of experience.

It is hard to overestimate the impact of this single essay on cultural approaches to media studies, especially in the United States. "A Cultural Approach to Communication" would receive an even wider reading after it was published in a 1989 collection entitled *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society.* The rich complexity of Carey's argument made it available for others' purposes. Some cited it to underpin their theoretical critique of the dominant traditions of quantitative media research. Others took particular interest in its account of the history of communication technologies. But many sought to apply its theoretical insights to interpret media narratives, the practices of professional communicators, and audience behavior as forms of ritual.

Politics as Symbolic Ritual

Although one could look for ritual in many stylized and habitual forms of media communication, many scholars have applied ritual theory to the study of politics. This choice reflects, in part, the centrality of politics as a domain of human action in modern secular societies. It is in politics that groups confront one another with their conflicting interests, candidates vie for election, representatives debate legislation, and governments strive to establish their legitimacy. Each of these activities (and more) establishes conditions for ritual action. A modern democratic society enacts itself in public protests, the trek to the polls, the signing of a bill, or the swearing in of new leaders. As scholars of traditional rituals have long noted, rituals mark passages from one state to another, and politics is filled with such moments of transition and transformation.

The choice to study politics by using ritual theory also reflects a tension within the tradition itself. Do rituals, by their nature, always aim to promote group unity and consensus, or are there subtle ways in which ritual may give voice to conflict and dissent? The debates around this point typically begin with a discussion of the theories of solidarity proposed by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1984). Durkheim distinguishes the forms of solidarity that characterized traditional communities from those found in modern societies. The "mechanical" forms of solidarity characteristic of small-scale traditional communities often depended upon religious authority, the homogeneity of the group, and familial ties. "Organic" forms of solidarity rely upon the interdependent relations created by the modern division of labor. In that modern context, the cohesion of society depends more on interconnectedness and complementarity than on unanimity, and social authority depends more on adherence to rules and law than on obedience to authority. Ritual theories have at times imagined both these forms of solidarity, sometimes arguing that media rituals produce a strong sense of shared fellow feeling, and other times

arguing that the media rituals dramatize the social order in a way that allows the coordination of complex, multicultural contemporary societies. Carey's 1975 essay (Carey, 1989) has sometimes been read as overemphasizing social unity and consensus (Sella, 2007). Because he wrote that essay in the waning days of the Vietnam War, it is not entirely surprising that Carey would argue for the "restorative value" of a ritual model for "shaping our common culture" (Carey, 1989, p. 27). His later work, as noted below, speaks directly to the darker aspects of political ritual. In the two decades separating those essays, a series of British and American theorists explored ritual's power to create consensus or to instigate conflict.

The British sociologist Philip Elliott offered an early and compelling argument that ritual theory could be applied to analyze news media in class-structured pluralistic societies. His essay "Press Performance as Political Ritual" (Elliott, 1982) identified examples of news coverage or "press rites" that could be plausibly interpreted as forms of ritual. He defines a press ritual as "rule-governed activity of a symbolic character involving mystical notions which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought or feeling which the leadership of the society or group hold to be of special significance" (Elliott, 1982, p. 147). Each of the elements in this definition matters to Elliott. Press coverage and storytelling is rule-governed in the sense that professional communicators share taken-for-granted routines by which they do their work. Although we typically think of news as representational, offering facts and information that conform to reality, press performances often involve symbolic appeals, introducing interpretations not grounded in the facts themselves. Finally, the definition recognizes an unequal relationship between the producers and the consumers of news, in which the perspectives of society's leadership or dominant class are accorded special weight. That is, news stories often propose a preferred version of reality, whose authority the audience might acknowledge but to which it will not always assent.

Elliott's examples focus on moments of social crisis: two bombings in Northern Ireland in 1974 and the 1977 trial of IRA members for a hostage taking and siege. He discovers common patterns of ritualized storytelling in British news coverage of those events. Both events inspired public expressions of solidarity and condemnation, dramatizations of the work of law enforcement agencies, the invocation of culturally loaded symbols of group difference, and self-conscious efforts on the part of reporters to assert the deeper social meanings of the events (especially in the tabloid press). Drawing upon the work of the anthropologist Victor Turner (1969), Elliott notes that this coverage contained moments when the formal structure of social authority was affirmed and moments when stories gave voice to "anti-structure" or what Turner calls "communitas" – a recognition of individuals not as the occupants of social roles but as concrete historical persons (Turner, 1969, p. 131). Elliott believes that the concept of ritual helps us understand how news stories can articulate both those moments. At times, for example, stories about terrorism affirm the structure of social and political institutions, as when they express shock in a way that makes the violence seem sacrilegious, not merely tragic. Press rites may implicate journalists in the work of institutions even when their news stories

criticize the government, as when the press's interventions become the premise for a response that reaffirms the government's political authority. At other times, such press rites may celebrate moments of communitas and the fundamental kinship of the human species. Whether affirming structure or anti-structure, however, press rites put the social order into play, and this leads Elliott to conclude that "[r]itual is less a communication about social reality than a customary performance giving symbolic expression to social relationships" (Elliott, 1982, p. 168).

Subsequent scholars have used ritual theory to describe what they call "media events": dramatic, large-scale, ritualized media performances that seem to unite audiences in a common experience. The most widely cited work of this sort has been Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz's *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History* (1992). Dayan and Katz focus upon a specific genre of television stories that they believe has theoretical and social significance: large-scale non-routine live events that are widely broadcast, often simultaneously around the world, and that "tell a primordial story about current affairs" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 1). The two researchers describe their book as applying an "anthropology of ceremony" to the process of mass communication. Large-scale broadcast rituals reconstitute the ceremonial space for the home viewer, and in the process they summon up the social order. Even when Dayan and Katz recognize the elements of contradiction and conflict entailed in some media events, they tend to emphasize the ways in which such rituals strive for reconciliation (and not merely coerce consent). They stress the celebratory or "festive" aspect of media events in order to square the differences between previous functionalist traditions of social scientific analysis and the "humanistic analysis" of media genres. Dayan and Katz also want to emphasize the aesthetic qualities of media events and to resist critical theories that, they believe, treat aesthetic form as mere shadow play that disguises ideological power. They want to assert that the symbolic character of media events matters. In the end they also hope to make their theory of media form more susceptible to analysis by media effects researchers.

Dayan and Katz identify three major types of media events: contests, conquests, and coronations. The three share a number of qualities but each follows its own protocols and creates its own tone. *Contests* may include political events like congressional hearings or presidential debates, as well as sporting competitions. Contests typically pit individuals or groups against one another, observe rules of engagement, and occur in a specified time and place. *Conquests* are one-time events in which protagonists are celebrated for reaching beyond normal human limits; along the way they may break rules, but the effect is always that their charisma and authority are enhanced. *Coronations* follow strict rules and aim to achieve a magical effect; they "remind societies of their cultural heritage, provide reassurance of social and cultural continuity, and invite the public to take stock" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 37). Dayan and Katz generate 13 criteria by which to compare and contrast these different types of media events, including the rules under which the events operate; the roles played by principal, audience, and television presenter; the nature of the message; the form of authority affirmed; and the time and place in which the event occurs.

Despite these differences in staging and tone, Dayan and Katz argue, contests, conquests, and coronations share some common features. All media events disrupt the daily routines of both the media organizations that broadcast the event and the audience that witnesses it. For the media, such events interrupt their routine coverage; for viewers, the event constitutes a kind of "high holiday" in which they recognize that they are simultaneously joined to millions of others. Dayan and Katz argue that media events always require a third party as well, an organizing force apart from the media and from the audience. The broadcaster could not initiate such an event without calling into question the norms of professional objectivity by which the news media operate. Nonetheless, any media event must be preplanned, in the sense of being choreographed, and its substance and form must create a sense of reverence and ceremony. The scale, grandeur, and importance of media events can make them into celebrations of the civil religion, symbolic re-enactments of the social contract. Broadcasters willingly and enthusiastically participate in such moments of creation, although they cannot unilaterally instigate them.

Thus one of Dayan and Katz's key insights is that media events require collaboration between outside institutions or sponsors, professional communicators, and the audience. Because the event does not belong entirely to any of these parties, the form of the media ritual must be intelligible to each group. The sponsor must recognize that the staging of the event (for example, a political party convention) requires some effort to accommodate the needs of the media organization. That organization, in turn, must be able to claim that the event falls within its scope of normal professional practice. And the audience cannot be treated merely as a passive observer; the event cannot take on meaning if there is no one to witness it, and the audience's habits, aesthetic preferences, and interests figure into the decisions of both the sponsor and the media organization.

Although one of the book's strengths is Dayan and Katz's exploration of the aesthetic and social complexity of media events, the questions that interest other researchers most, about how media rituals not only represent the social order but instantiate cultural authority, remain somewhat obscured in this analysis. Dayan and Katz document in great detail the stylistic variations found in these broadcast media events, but those variations do not always correspond to any actual historical or cultural understandings that specific audiences use to interpret their media experience. In effect, Dayan and Katz often infer the experience of the audience from the form of the text, as when they say, in the quotation above, that media events "remind societies of their cultural heritage, provide reassurance of social and cultural continuity, and invite the public to take stock" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 37). The proliferation of new digital technologies and the fragmentation of the media audience in the 20 years since the book was published also raise questions about whether broadcasting remains as central an institution as it was from the 1950s through the 1980s. As Carey notes, the media events that interested Dayan and Katz "come from a later stage in the history of the nation state, or in the life of the new states, born after World War II" (Carey, 1998, p. 44). Most tellingly, Carey argues, the three types of events identified by Dayan and Katz – contests, conquests,

and coronations – do not account for the "social dramas of excommunication" often found in politics, that "not only create and reveal the basic values of the society but also reveal and create the social structure and its fundamental and often irreconcilable cleavages" (Carey, 1998, p. 47).

Karin Becker's study (1995) of the role the media play in constructing rituals in urban spaces admits a wider range of possible media events. She recognizes the importance of "officially sponsored festivals or occasions" but wants more attention paid to "apparently spontaneous performances" that "invert or deconstruct a dominant social hierarchy" (Becker, 1995, p. 629). Where Dayan and Katz treat the sponsoring organization, the media, and the audience as separate, Becker finds those groups more deeply intermingled in everyday experience. Media presence at an event signals to the public that a significant ritual is about to occur; the possibility of media coverage encourages organizers to make the structure of their event amenable to coverage; and the audience on the scene often notices the connection between media presence and the structure of the event (as when banks of cameras are allotted a special place, to give photographers a clear view of the most important action). For all these reasons and more, Becker believes that a media ritual is best understood as a cultural performance that produces reality through a collaboration between producer and consumer.

The domain of media that interests Becker most is journalism; she draws upon the scholarly literature on the sociology of news making, which frequently explores the work routines employed by reporters, as when Gaye Tuchman (1978) argues that objectivity should be understood as a "strategic ritual" used to insulate professional journalists from their critics and to manage the news organization's daily tasks. During fieldwork she conducted in Sweden, Becker studied a range of news events, from the "victorious homecoming of national sports teams" (Becker, 1995, p. 635) to smaller-scale amateur events such as school graduations, observing the behavior of the audience as well as that of the media professionals covering an event. She discovered, for example, that in everyday life strangers caught on camera often try to hide or disguise their faces; at ritual events, "people wave, smile, make faces and in other ways arrange themselves for being photographed." Becker's analysis points to an important conclusion that would later influence the work of Couldry (2003): that society has become increasingly identified with the worlds of experience created by "the media." Becker writes: "Through their actions, media signal when and where the performative character of the event begins and ends, and contribute to the ways the internal structure of the events is defined and sequenced" (Becker, 1995, p. 640). Even our ritual celebrations of public memory borrow much of their shape from the media coverage originally given to the events being remembered.

Becker complicates Dayan and Katz's account of media events by showing that newsgathering routines structure local events as well as momentous public ceremonies. Carey (1998) takes a different tack. He addresses the same domain of large-scale media events studied by Dayan and Katz but emphasizes the commonness of a darker form of cultural performance that they neglect: the degradation ceremonies

through which an individual or group is held up for ridicule or socially excommunicated, with no provision for redemption or reconciliation. Rituals often require sacrifice, and the media offer a vehicle for blood rites of many sorts; in movies, for example, we take it for granted that romantic partners die for love, intellectuals for their ideas, and patriots for their nation. Carey believes that in moments of political controversy degradation rituals may exert special power. At stake in such controversies are the very contours of the nation state. "Nations," Carey writes, "exist not only in media time but also in media space" (Carey, 1998, p. 45).

Carey's argument about the nation state as a form of social order runs in parallel with his efforts to imagine journalism as the literature of public life, as a symbolic form that historically emerged in concert with democracy and continues to provide a cultural space in which free societies seek to make their politics visible and conversable. The degradation rituals that Carey has in mind represent disruptions in this routine work of journalistic sense making and create moments of grave danger for democracy. Nations, as symbolic spaces, necessarily mark off their "meanings, values and identities" by patrolling their boundaries (Carey, 1998, p. 45). We easily recognize this phenomenon when the nation, as a physical and geographic entity, regulates the passage of immigrants and visitors across its borders. Carey is interested in the "inherently vague and indeterminate" boundaries that define the nation state as a symbolic entity. Those are the "places (and occasions) where people are marked, or mark themselves, as apostates, heretics, outsiders, interlopers, subversives, traitors or, simply, UnAmerican" (p. 45). He argues: "The symbolic space of the nation is primarily represented within the media and accounts for the often ferocious struggles among groups over the portrayal of identities, conduct and values in news and entertainment" (p. 45). These are not the festive moments of celebration and reconciliation that Dayan and Katz had in mind, but powerful rituals in which "bodies are stigmatized, reputations destroyed and citizens expelled into a guild of the guilty" (p. 45).

Carey chooses as his example the widely broadcast 1987 Senate hearings that considered whether to confirm Robert Bork as a US Supreme Court Justice. The refusal to confirm was not in itself that unusual. The Senate occasionally signals its rejection of a presidential nomination, often indirectly, before the matter ever comes up for a formal vote. What made the Bork hearings extraordinary, Carey argues, was that their intensity seemed so out of proportion with the material evidence of the nomination. Bork was widely regarded as an outstanding lawyer, judge, and scholar, and he had been confirmed by the Senate for two previous high administrative posts, as solicitor general and as an appellate judge. What made this case so distinctive was the televised media ritual that led to Bork being not only denied appointment but in effect shamed and excommunicated. Carey notes that several factors help explain how a familiar political process could be transformed into a degradation ritual, in which the fate of the nation was imagined to be at risk if Bork had been confirmed.

The hearings were continuously broadcast on cable television, creating a large supply of material from which broadcast organizations could choose dramatic

moments for their nightly news shows. The delay in the start of the hearings, from July 1 to September 15, gave partisans on both sides ample time to plan their strategies; but, as importantly, they gave journalists and the political system an extended opportunity to frame and intensify the issues at stake. Even the physical setting was precisely arranged with the needs of television crews in mind; the available camera angles screened out most of the surrounding audience, with its crowds of journalists, lobbyists, and observers, amplifying the agonistic confrontation between Bork and the senators. "The stage itself was kept free of any action that might contradict the image of rectitude, control and jurisprudential dignity" (Carey, 1998, p. 57). The dais on which the senators sat was lowered, to put them on a level closer to Bork's and to avoid the impression that the Senate was persecuting the nominee. Although 200 groups had lobbied against the Bork nomination, arguing that his positions on issues such as abortion, integration, police power, and censorship were outside the usual norms of constitutional jurisprudence, not one asked to appear at the hearing to give testimony. Bork's opponents recognized that opening the hearings to the usual back-and-forth of interest group politics would have given him an opportunity to impugn his critics' motives. The tight choreography enabled the hearings to assume the trappings of a sacred ritual, allowing Democratic senators to control the portrayal of Bork as someone outside the American mainstream.

As a number of theorists have argued, rituals signify most powerfully when they are embodied, and Carey believes that the Bork hearings offer a compelling example of that principle. The hearings did not turn on abstract questions of political belief. The actual presence of Bork was an essential feature of the degradation ritual. Carey (1998, p. 60) writes: "The moral contours of American society were inscribed, however imperfectly, on the body of Robert Bork." Moreover, Bork's own background, Carey argues, offered him no political cover or protection from certain lines of questioning. Because Bork was so "generically American," he could be made to embody the "moral and attitudinal boundaries of the social body" (Carey, 1998, p. 61). Bork's supporters could not invoke his sexual, religious, racial, or ethnic identity in order to defend him or to discourage certain lines of questioning (as would later occur during the Clarence Thomas hearings). Although Carey does not cite it, his argument on this point seems to draw upon the work of Kenneth Burke (1965), who observed that rituals of atonement require a perfect victim for sacrifice. Carey does not borrow Burke's language of scapegoat, for he believes that in this situation the hearings did not produce consensus or reconciliation, but a deeper division. The literature on media events, he argues, cannot easily account for this sort of example, which featured "drama without rest or resolution, drama without catharsis or consensus, drama which divides people more sharply and intensifies the perception of social difference" (Carey, 1998, p. 67). For Carey, the Bork hearings were an exercise in "social cruelty," and the media an indispensable participant in the creation of that degradation ritual.

Like Carey, Marvin and Ingle begin with a Durkheimian question: "What binds the nation together?" (Marvin & Ingle, 1999, p. 1); and, like Carey, they turn to

ritual for an answer. Where Carey emphasizes the dark power of the degradation ritual to shame and expel those who stand outside the mainstream, Marvin and Ingle focus on the single totem object worshipped most deeply in American civil religion: the flag. That worship comes at great cost, however. Blood sacrifice, periodically renewed and commemorated, binds the nation. Marvin and Ingle's argument echoes one of the most powerful claims made in the literature on media ritual: that the modern political order is much less rational than it purports to be, and that, for all its laws and regulatory processes and appeals to rationality, the modern state depends upon its willingness to sacrifice its own members. The redemptive powers of the flag and the blood sacrifice it commands are most obvious in war, but similarly structured rituals can be found in holiday celebrations, elections, and other settings where the memory of the "last sacrifice" (Marvin & Ingle, 1999, p. 5) mythically summonses the nation and inspires group solidarity.

The media constantly articulate and extend the forms of flag worship, making the totem visible, familiar, and compelling. That symbolic work has made the flag the most widely known icon of American life. Its image and combination of colors appear on nearly everything; it is hung on every civic podium where words of all sorts are spoken; its display opens sporting events; it inspires musical tributes; in movies and television and advertising, as in everyday life, it is an icon instantly recognized and always understood as mythically powerful, even by those who dispute it. The work of maintaining the flag totem requires many hands, even when the burden of bodily sacrifice falls on fewer shoulders. Just as Dayan and Katz describe how an event sponsor, news organizations, and the audience all collaborate in the construction of a media event, so do Marvin and Ingle observe the different domains in which totem rituals play out. The task of guarding the flag belongs to a totem class that includes the president and the armed forces. Citizens, in turn, operate in a popular domain, in which they sustain the meanings attributed to the flag when they "not only touch the flag but remake it endlessly" (Marvin & Ingle, 1999, p. 6). The deepest struggles occur in what Marvin and Ingle call the "affiliative domain." Groups in this domain cannot control the totem; that cultural authority belongs to the totem class. Affiliative struggle thus establishes one of the most central and powerful dynamics of American political life, creating moments of disunity and violence that may threaten the legitimacy or even the existence of the nation.

Marvin and Ingle document in exhaustive detail all the places where the flag inserts itself in everyday communicative practice. In the display of flag colors and shapes on the jackets of Olympic athletes, in its draping on the caskets of dead soldiers, in the elaborate protocols attached to its handling, in its historic appropriation by the Ku Klux Klan, in its defacing during anti-war protests, and in so many other instances, Marvin and Ingle repeatedly demonstrate the communicative power of the flag. For ritual theorists, the media exercise political power in just such ways, by organizing, interpreting, and emphasizing society's communication practices, and by aligning them in the service of widely shared social mythologies. At first glance, this argument may seem just another way of describing the ideological effect that

cultural studies attribute to the media. Ritual theories of media can be understood as one version of cultural studies, but with this singular distinction: ritual theories accept mystification as a necessary condition of social solidarity, whereas critical versions of cultural studies see it as a betrayal of the rational practices that ought to govern public life.

Recent Theories of Media Ritual

By the 1990s, scholarly interest in ritual as a theoretical concept had widened enough to inspire more systematic attempts to apply it to communication and media studies. In particular, scholars were interested in whether ritual, as a theoretical concept, could offer insights about a question that had moved to the center of media studies during the 1980s: the nature of symbolic power and the role that the media play in its display, allocation, and management. The most prominent recent contributions to ritual theories of media have come from Eric Rothenbuhler (1998, 2006) and Nick Couldry (2003). Both survey the scholarly literature on ritual, including the works discussed in this chapter, but they also draw upon more general studies of ritual, especially studies of religious rituals by the anthropologist Roy Rappaport (1999), the historian of religion Jonathan Smith (1987), the religion and culture scholar Ronald Grimes (1990), and the religious studies scholar Catherine Bell (1992, 1997). (Couldry also draws heavily on contemporary European social theory.) Rothenbuhler and Couldry, who have occasionally written together (Couldry & Rothenbuhler, 2007) or published in each other's projects (Couldry, 2005), share a number of theoretical perspectives, but they tend to approach the study of ritual from somewhat different perspectives. Rothenbuhler generally works within the area that American scholars call communication studies, which treats media as one set of instances within the larger system of communication practices. Couldry considers himself more of a media studies scholar; his studies of media ritual address more directly questions of social legitimacy and power.

The title of Rothenbuhler's main book on the topic, *Ritual Communication: From Everyday Conversation to Mediated Ceremony* (Rothenbuhler, 1998), suggests the far-reaching applications he imagines. He defines ritual as "the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behavior to symbolically affect or participate in the serious life" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 53). Like Carey and others who have studied media rituals, Rothenbuhler treats ritual as a communicative act. Unlike some others, he often stresses its voluntary character; ritual "is not so much a holy power external to human affairs with irresistible influence over them, as something people do" (p. 54). Although he recognizes that "the forms of ritual are relatively invariant" (p. 59), he allows for more variation in the participants' interpretation of ritual events. When dealing with the importance of embodiment, a crucial concept in Carey and in Marvin and Ingle, Rothenbuhler recognizes the materiality of ritual, although he attends more closely to the system of signs that ritual mobilizes in order to do its work. One of the most interesting features in his

definition is his last phrase, which suggests that the purpose of ritual is to "participate in the serious life." Rothenbuhler borrows that phrase from Durkheim, who used it to point to the domain that others would call the sacred or the religious. The secularity of the phrase, in Rothenbuhler, seems intended to claim a transcendent space in human existence without having to label it sacred. Unlike Marvin and Ingle, Rothenbuhler does not stress the persistence of religion in modern secular societies; he settles instead for a functional similarity in the way in which contemporary societies use ritual "for the regulation of secular affairs" (p. 25).

Rothenbuhler argues for a more gentle and humane understanding of the possibilities of ritual. He takes his initial cue from Carey's 1975 essay on the ritual model, from which he derives three key observations: first, that our communication models ought to help us understand "the meaning of things" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 125); second, that the point of communication is not to provide new information but often to confirm the familiarity of everyday life; and, third, that communication has the "magical, reality-constituting, symbolic effectivity of all properly performed rituals" (p. 126). How we choose to talk about the world matters to Rothenbuhler, and talking about communication as a ritual offers us a more nuanced understanding of what we are up to when we communicate. Because he sees ritual as an interactive form that could help individuals participate more fully in larger, more fundamental realities (the world that others might call the sacred), Rothenbuhler allows for greater individual agency than most theorists of ritual might. He imagines a noncoercive social order that a self-conscious commitment to ritual communication might maintain – a far cry from Marvin and Ingle's argument that the social order ultimately depends upon blood sacrifice.

Couldry addresses the same literature but with a different set of problems in view. He sees ritual as a means to explain "the media's impact on social life" (Couldry, 2003, p. 1). With that disarmingly simple summary he introduces a sophisticated theory of media ritual as the key mechanism that legitimizes society's distribution of symbolic power. The steps in his argument go something like this. The media help us imagine ourselves as connected to the social world. In their representations and storytelling, we come to imagine "the media" as a stand-in for the social order. Although Couldry does not cite this example, this was the very claim of the daily newspaper as it emerged in the nineteenth century – that each day it "represented" the entire society (or at least those parts of it worth noting). The most powerful media effect is something that Couldry calls the myth of the "mediated centre." Unlike Dayan and Katz, who take for granted the social significance of central broadcast media, Couldry argues that media rituals do not merely express the social order but naturalize it. They make the media's role as symbolic arbiter legitimate and something that we all take for granted.

This line of argument leads Couldry to the following definition: "Media rituals are formalized actions organised around key media-related categories and boundaries, whose performance frames, or suggests a connection with, wider media-related values" (Couldry, 2003, p. 29). Some of the elements of this definition are familiar. Couldry describes ritual as a formalized action, by which he means that ritual follows

intelligible and consistent protocols. What is distinctive in his approach is his argument about "media-related categories and boundaries." Unlike some other theorists of ritual, who emphasize fellow-feeling and the experience of solidarity it produces, Couldry believes that media rituals shape the cognitive categories by which societies operate. They do so by selecting and condensing the widely dispersed categories of human thought and experience and making them visible at key moments of social distress. Like many other media theorists, Couldry notes that the media widely circulate images, forms of speech, ideas, and social categories. Ideological theories of media argue that those materials reflect forms of power that stand outside of and apart from the media. For Couldry, the existence of "the media" is itself the ideological effect:

> Media rituals operate to naturalise the notion of a "mediated social order" within which all specific ideologies must compete, as well as legitimising the particularly representational privilege of the media (as a centralized system for producing and distributing images, information and opinions). (Couldry, 2003, p. 46)

Within Couldry's argument, "the media" come to represent the very idea of the social. He builds upon Carey's observation that "the fundamental form of power is the power to define, allocate, and display" reality (Carey, 1989, p. 87). Media rituals call attention to that symbolic power. For example, in Marvin and Ingle's account of flag worship, the images and myths surrounding patriotism and nationhood circulate widely and offer material that appears in passing in many media narratives. Media rituals choose particular moments within that social imaginary and heighten their importance. Thus the return of the flag-draped coffin of the fallen soldier speaks to a social world beyond its individual instance. Media coverage of that act implicitly references the cause to which that soldier gave his life, the sacrifice required of the nation's families, and the solemnity with which the nation treats such sacrifices. Couldry would argue that that ritual also asserts the power of the media to witness such acts on behalf of the whole society and to serve as preferred arbiter of the meaning of those acts.

The works of Rothenbuhler and Couldry suggest three areas in which the study of media ritual might profitably continue in the future. First, more scholars from many fields now study the role of media in cultural rituals. The recent collection of essays by Ronald Grimes and his colleagues on *Ritual, Media, and Conflict* (Grimes, Hüsken, Simon, & Venbrux, 2011) includes contributions by anthropologists, historians, and religious studies scholars. Grimes opens that collection with an observation that would resonate with Carey, Couldry, and Marvin and Ingle: "rituals can provoke or escalate conflict" (Grimes et al., 2011, p. 3). Although the contributors to that volume sometimes treat media as instruments of power – a position less nuanced than that of others discussed in this chapter – their willingness to take the media seriously represents a step forward and beyond older views that dismissed media as an epiphenomenon that merely reflected deeper, nonmediated cultural practices. Second, the study of the actual practices of media

ritual will continue to flourish, and will likely remain an important form of research for years to come. Marvin and Ingle as well as Couldry build their theoretical accounts upon detailed empirical evidence. Such finely textured research could influence professional practice and the education of journalists as well, by demonstrating to media professionals the ethical and social implications of their everyday work. And, third, much theory remains to be written, especially in relation to the international flows of culture and information and the role of new media. Couldry (2009) has asked whether his concept of "the media" has a future, given the purported decline of centralized media organizations and the rise of widely distributed new digital technologies. Couldry does not think that central media are collapsing, but he does see the emergence of an "open-ended crisis of appearances," in which "the media" become a "site of struggle" for the competing forces of "market-based fragmentation v. continued pressures of centralization" (Couldry, 2009, p. 447). Thus for Couldry today, as for Carey nearly 40 years ago, the deep insight offered by ritual approaches to the media remains the same – that humans create social order from symbolic materials of their own making, invest the authority to do that work in large-scale cultural organizations, and spend their lives facing up to the consequences of what they have done.

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11

Jacques Ellul and the Nature of Propaganda in the Media

Randal Marlin

Introduction

The extraordinary depth and breadth of Jacques Ellul's thinking about propaganda is likely to ensure sustained attention to his views for many years to come. Already his *Propaganda* has become a classic, still widely read and discussed some 50 years after it was written. He brings to the subject a remarkable range of intellectual talents and interests, nourished by personal life experiences that infuse his thinking with passion. Born in Bordeaux in 1912, he experienced Nazi and collaborationist propaganda during the German occupation in World War II and communist propaganda both before and after the war. Opposed to Marxist propaganda, he nevertheless had great respect for Marx's own writings. He also became a committed Christian who vehemently opposed enlistment of sacred values in furtherance of political objectives. In each case, his opinions were formed from personal acquaintance with propagandists, but also from diligent and sustained study of the factual background relevant to these and other propaganda-related matters. A glance at his published works and scholarly discussion of them will confirm this claim (see Hanks, 2000, 2007).

In what follows we will focus on the sociological, historical, political, and ethical aspects of his thought, simply noting points of intersection with existential and religious dimensions. But it should be borne in mind that Ellul's work on propaganda was subsequent to, and grew out of, his work on the technological society. He believed that the modern industrialized world is founded on technique, defined as the most efficient means for accomplishing given ends, and that the proliferation of techniques, one of them being propaganda, has led to out-of-control production of things of doubtful net social benefit. Advertising, public relations, lobbying, and the

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like all contribute to corporate profit maximization by trumpeting the benefits of products while downplaying their harms to health, the environment, or social well-being. The solution to problems is always some additional technique. Thus, if traffic and noise, complicated gadgetry and other things get to you, well, the pharmaceutical industry is waiting for you with some tranquillizer.

Ellul's study of propaganda needs to be seen in the above light. Propaganda encompasses more than the words and symbols used to energize a nation into starting and maintaining wars or to get an electorate to support a candidate, a party, or a policy. It also relates to commerce, culture, and social movements. It performs the function of adapting the human being to technology rather than the reverse, in the process reducing human freedom and spontaneity. His study is meant to serve as a warning.

Definition

As commonly understood, the word "propaganda" has a negative connotation, but its etymology is from the Latin *propagare*, meaning "to spread, propagate." In the nominalized gerundive form the Latin *propaganda* can translate as "things to be propagated." So interpreted, the word is neutral in its connotation, not signifying something good or bad by itself alone. It is just linked to spreading the word, getting the message out, trying to influence others. Whether propaganda in this neutral sense refers to something good or bad would depend entirely on what it is that is propagated, or on the manner in which the propagation is done. Historically, the word has a strong connection to the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide founded by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, an organization that formalized the work of a committee of cardinals and others set up under Pope Gregory XIII a few decades earlier. The organization came to be known as "the Propaganda," and no doubt the name had negative connotations for Protestants in those times.

Though instances of the word "propaganda" used negatively can be found prior to World War I, it is only since then that we find, deeply embedded in English usage, the idea of propaganda as something wrong or ethically suspect. When today someone says of another that he or she has engaged in propaganda, this is usually treated as an accusation that needs to be defended against. It is associated with lies and deception. Typically, an enemy is said to engage in propaganda, whereas "our side" may use the same tactics, but it is characterized as providing information rather than engaging in propaganda. Whereas the Nazi propaganda minister, Josef Goebbels, did not mind calling his ministry one of "Propaganda and People's Enlightenment," suggesting that "propaganda" was being treated as a neutral term, English-speaking countries prefer to use the word "information" for a ministry doing essentially the same work.

What are the negative characteristics that give the word "propaganda" its negative connotation? Typically propaganda involves deception of some kind, or it impedes the ability of an audience to assess rationally and in a properly informed

way the message that the communicator wishes to impart. There are many different ways of doing this. An obvious one is lying; but one can also deceive through use of ambiguous language or misleading imagery, whether with photographs or by word pictures. Often propaganda is conveyed by powerful metaphors, slogans, or music. One form of propaganda is carried out by making true factual statements, but so selected as to give a wrong impression. This can be quite deliberate, as when one reports that nation A attacked nation B, without mentioning that B actually attacked A first. Or it can be unintended. To reach the masses, a message often has to be simplified and repeated. In simplifying a message one needs to leave out qualifiers, and this means that propaganda is likely to be somewhat misleading, intentionally or not, if the aim is to reach the masses.

Ellul can appear to be inconsistent when he speaks of propaganda, because he sometimes uses the term to refer to "total propaganda," defined more narrowly than it is customarily understood. Propaganda in this sense is a purely modern phenomenon, dependent on the existence of the mass media of communication, combined with a certain use of scientific knowledge about how to affect human thought, feelings, and action, and working on a population where individuals, lacking the support of earlier, tightly knit communities such as family, church, and village, are easily made to adopt a given mass consciousness. With total propaganda a person undergoes a personality change, absorbing completely the basic values the propaganda conveys. But Ellul also speaks of propaganda in a less strict (for him) sense, which includes propaganda that is less than total. It is in this second sense that Ellul is able to write a history of propaganda going back to ancient Greek and Roman times. He does this by pointing to resemblances between modern propaganda and effective persuasive forms of communication, which nevertheless have some resemblance to total propaganda – although, strictly speaking, "total" propaganda would not have existed then. Ellul qualifies total propaganda as the only "genuine" propaganda, on the understanding that anything less than total propaganda is not "really" propaganda but only something that approximates it.

While initially claiming that his purpose in writing *Propaganda* was not to provide a definition, he does – usefully – provide what he calls at least a partial definition, as follows:

> *Propaganda is a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization.* (Ellul, 1973, p. 61)

This definition fits well the purpose of his book by linking propaganda to technological society and its assault on human freedom.

Elsewhere Ellul has given a definition that translates as follows: "Means for the conquest of power thanks to the support of psychologically manipulated groups or masses, or for exercising this power with support from the masses" (Larousse, *La grande encyclopédie*, 1975, p. 8985). This definition warrants attention, because

it focuses on the element of power and provides thereby a way of distinguishing the sincere advocate of some religion or ideology, who seeks to propagate a message to others for their own good (something he does not want to call propaganda) from those who cynically make use of such doctrines for the purpose of extending their own power and control over others (clearly a case of propaganda). This definition is controversial, first because it makes no room for a neutral definition of propaganda, but also because, even within the negative definition, some may feel that the spreading of doctrines that appear to them to contradict reason is enough to warrant applying the term "propaganda" in a negative sense to such activity, no matter whether the activity is undertaken sincerely or cynically. Nevertheless the definition provides a useful perspective on propaganda. As Ellul and many others have acknowledged, the word "propaganda" is somewhat pliable in its meaning and different writers have sought to give their own special interpretations. The idea that propaganda has the property of epistemic defectiveness as an essential characteristic is another strong candidate for inclusion in any definition of it (Cunningham, 2002; Ross, 2002).

Characteristics of Propaganda

Propaganda analysis can take many forms. One is to locate and spell out different devices used to trick or beguile target audiences. Ellul does this in his short but illuminating historical study of propaganda, *Histoire de la propagande* (Ellul, 1967). He notes, for example, how the tyrant Peisistratus of Athens (sixth century BCE) made use of the technique of staging an attack against himself in order to persuade Athenians to give him a bodyguard. Peisistratus then used the bodyguard to expand his power, eventually becoming tyrant of Athens. On another occasion, having lost power, he regained it by displaying a tall and beautiful woman dressed in armor and claiming that she was the goddess Athena and that she supported him. The ruse worked, providing an early example of the "God is on our side" technique for winning over a population.

While these and many more specific examples of propaganda technique are valuable, special interest in Ellul's writing has to do with his novel and challenging insights into the phenomenon of propaganda as a whole. There is one set of characteristics that we find with propaganda as conventionally understood, and a different set of characteristics that, he argues, also qualify as propaganda. He observes that propaganda succeeds because people in the mass prefer simple pictures to complicated truths. He provides us with the interesting idea of pre-propaganda – that is, a background set of myths that a propagandist can usefully harness when the time comes. Ellul has ideas about the relation between propaganda and truth, timeliness, and democracy. He also considers the effects of propaganda on the individual and society.

The picture he paints is a gloomy one, since he asserts that propaganda is inevitable while at the same he denies that its inevitability entails that it is justifiable.

His arguments in *Propaganda* tend to lead the reader into an impasse with no Ellulian solution ready to hand. That is deliberate, as his aim is to awaken the reader into facing the very great dilemma posed by a technological system with self-augmenting techniques leading us all into an unsustainable future. The reader needs to consult some of his other writings for a more optimistic approach. The conclusion to his book certainly does not counsel meeting propaganda by issuing equal and opposite propaganda. Propaganda acts "in only one direction (toward the destruction of truth and freedom), no matter what the good intentions or the good will may be of those who manipulate it" (Ellul, 1973, p. 257).

Categories of propaganda

In the field of propaganda studies Ellul is perhaps best known and appreciated for his categorization of propaganda into an eight-fold division made up of four different pairs. On one side of the pairing we find a kind of propaganda that is easily recognizable, as it fits well the common conception. On the other side we find categories less likely to be identified with propaganda, but, if Ellul is right, we should pay a lot of attention to them, since they have a lot to do with our self-understanding, autonomy, and freedom.

1 The first and most important of the four pairings is between political and what he calls sociological propaganda. Political propaganda is carried out by governments, political parties, pressure groups, and so on and uses specific methods calculated to achieve clearly defined political goals. It differs from advertising, where the goals are economic. Propaganda of this kind can be strategic or tactical, the latter dealing with more immediate goals (such as carrying out demonstrations) designed to affect the masses in ways favorable to accomplishing long-term political objectives.

By contrast, sociological propaganda does not involve specific groups with defined goals. It is carried out by society as a whole, through individuals or groups communicating consciously or unconsciously messages that serve to bring individual thinking and attitudes into conformity with those of the larger society. As described by Ellul, it is

> the group of manifestations by which any society seeks to integrate the maximum number of individuals into itself, to unify its members' behaviour according to a pattern, to spread its style of life abroad, and thus to impose itself on other groups. (Ellul, 1973, 62)

An ideology penetrates a society this way through a social context. Depending on that context, all kinds of expression can contribute to this form of propaganda: movies, advertising, public relations and the like. Ellul thought that France in 1960 had too many divergent influences to be dominated by sociological propaganda,

unlike the USA, where filmmakers could project the "American way of life" without consciously engaging in propaganda (though we can also find deliberateness in the earlier films, say, of Jack Warner).

Some key features of sociological propaganda are that it is diffuse and is based on "a general climate, an atmosphere that influences people imperceptibly without having the appearance of propaganda" (Ellul, 1973, p. 64). It springs up spontaneously, not with the aim of engaging in propaganda. Nevertheless it is very powerful and progressively gets people to adapt to the social order and conform to its thinking and rules of behavior. An example of this would be Victorian Britain, where the glorification of monarchy and empire were all-pervasive.

Ellul recognizes that one "hesitates" to call all the relevant social influences propaganda, because there is no obvious guiding hand in this – as, say, in the case of Goebbels' and Nazi propaganda. And he acknowledges that neither sociologists nor the general public call the phenomenon he has described "propaganda." But his reason for using the phrase "sociological propaganda" is that he sees the societal influences as appearing in the same media and as being directed by the same people who make other kinds of propaganda. In other words, propaganda will be directed toward getting certain facts ingrained in people's minds, in the knowledge that these people will reason to certain conclusions and discuss them with others. You reach a clear point of propaganda when "the combination of advertising, public relations, social welfare and so on produces a certain general conception of society, a particular way of life" (Ellul, 1973, p. 65).

This general conception becomes an unquestioned foundation for judgments concerning what is good or bad. Those who don't share that conception are considered bad. Once this way of life is engrained in people's minds, the work of more direct propaganda is made much easier. Cigarettes can be (and were, with the help of Edward L. Bernays) marketed in the name of freedom and of their connection with American history. Dissidents in the USA can be dismissed, as in the case of Senator Joe McCarthy's attacks on the liberal left, as being "un-American."

An important feature of sociological propaganda is that it works slowly and gently, introducing a truth, an ethics in benign form, but it ends up by "creating a fully established personality structure" (Ellul, 1973, p. 66). It is also hard to dislodge, once it becomes established. Ellul mentions Bernays as among the propagandists who worked to influence social trends in a way that would benefit his clients. We see the same principles at work today as a certain conception of freedom is promoted by and among Tea Party activists in the USA, so that government regulation is seen as bad and un-American. Such a sociological climate favors the abandonment of government restrictions on financial and other sectors, allowing abuses that favor the super-rich and big business to the detriment of a middle class of workers, pensioners, and entrepreneurs and leading to crises and government bailouts for the "too big to fail" sectors. These events have occurred after Ellul's death in 1994, but he saw very clearly how a sociological outlook could be encouraged in a way that made the work of public relations specialists and lobbyists much easier. Sociological propaganda produces the hot buttons, as it were, so that the

political propagandists only have to push them, by making appropriate linkages. Of course opponents could make other and competing linkages, but getting these other interpretations to the general public takes a lot of money, and this, by definition, makes the super-rich ostensibly better equipped for battle. When the Occupy Wall Street movement began in September 17, 2011, mainstream media derided its lack of a specific program. They missed the point, which was to shape a sociological climate in which specific programs favoring the "99 percent" of the population could get a more receptive hearing, and in which those policies favoring the "1 percent" of very wealthy people would get more critical treatment.

Ellul thought that the USA was particularly advanced in the area of sociological propaganda by virtue of its historical need to bring conformity to the diverse communities of immigrants. Psychological standardization was introduced to form the "melting pot." This also served economic interests, because by building conformity in the psychological outlook it became easier to provide mass markets and to facilitate the mass production of goods. Ellul's final observation about the "American way of life" is that the superiority complex connected with it creates resentment and hampers US propaganda efforts internationally, even though USA's technical superiority is impressive by itself and brings its own favorable (for many) propaganda.

2 In the second pairing Ellul contrasts propaganda of agitation with propaganda of integration. Again, the second of the pair is less recognizable as propaganda, but, as a result of Ellul's writing, specific reference to "propaganda of integration" can now be found in many treatments of the subject (Foulkes, 1983 is one example).

Propaganda of agitation is most often in opposition to some established order and involves rousing people up, enlisting their energies on behalf of some cause – often that of revolution or war. In the case of the latter, governments or other groups, such as the church at the time of the crusades, may be involved. Ellul thinks of Lenin as one who brought agitation to its height; and he proposes that his revolutionary government maintained such propaganda even after coming to power, in order to crush centers of resistance, including the kulaks. The Nazis likewise would whip people up into a frenzy when they wanted to bring about some social or economic transformation. Usually agitation propaganda can only be of short duration, because people cannot be kept too long at "the highest level of sacrifice, conviction, and devotion" (Ellul, 1973, p. 72).

In the case of subversive propaganda, hate is a simple and effective way of mobilizing the people, and Ellul speaks of targeting some not too powerful enemy as being a very successful tactic, as long as people can be made to believe that the designated group is the source of all their misery. Here the choice of target can be very diverse – communist, bourgeois, Jew, colonialist, or saboteur – it matters only that people believe that eliminating the targeted group will relieve them of their oppressed state. Another appeal that can be combined with hatred is the appeal to

liberty, as in the case of a colonized people. Or there can be promises of bread and land, as in the case of Leninist propaganda. One important feature of agitation propaganda is that it can be communicated by simple means, without requiring the mass media of communication. It tends to feed on itself, as each person reached tends to promulgate the message on his or her own. Finally, agitation propaganda is well suited to a target group that is less educated and poorly informed.

Ellul considers integration propaganda to be of the greatest significance in modern times – more so than agitation propaganda, even though in a contest between the two forms the latter may win out, as in the case of Front de Libération Nationale propaganda in France and Algeria in the 1950s and early 1960s. He treats integration propaganda as a modern phenomenon, not existing before the twentieth century, because it involves total adherence to a society's truths and behavioral patterns, including perfect adaptation to the group, sharing its "stereotypes, beliefs and reactions." Propaganda of integration aims at a total submersion of the individual into the collectivity; it involves "a total molding of the person in depth" (Ellul, 1973, p. 76). Intellectuals may appear hostile to integration propaganda, but, when they share the same stereotypes myths as the whole society – such as technology, nation, progress, and so on – they are ripe for falling under its influence.

When a revolution is carried out through agitation propaganda, the victorious party needs to find a new form of propaganda to help with integrating people into the new society, and that can pose problems. Agitation propaganda acts swiftly, while integration propaganda "acts slowly, gradually and imperceptibly" (p. 77).

3 Vertical propaganda differs from horizontal propaganda by virtue of being directed from above by some recognized authority – a leader, a technician, or a political or religious head. It is conceived in "the secret recesses of political enclaves" (p. 80) and uses all the technical methods of mass communication. The propagandee becomes passive in the face of a speaker whose message is one-way, allowing for no dialogue. The audience enters a quasi-hypnotic state and reacts as if by conditioned reflex. The individual, acting and shouting on cue, has become depersonalized, mechanized, and dominated. Both Hitler and Stalin utilized this kind of propaganda, and Ellul sees it as happening also in France since the 1950s and in the United States. Although this kind of propaganda is easy to make, its effects wear off soon.

Horizontal propaganda is a fairly recent phenomenon and operates in relatively small groups. Individuals are brought under a group leader who gets the others talking, guiding their discussion along lines of thought that will lead to the conclusions the group leader wishes to impart. The group will appear to arrive at certain conclusions on its own, but the leader will know how to frame things so that the desired conclusions are likely to follow from the discussion. In this form of propaganda the targeted group appears to have discovered the relevant truths on its own, even though the leader will have played a crucial role. Chinese propaganda has often taken this form. The difficulty with this variety of propaganda is that it competes with the views of

other groups, such as the family. Conditioning within one group can be offset when a member of that group joins another group, where opinions differ. This could be family or a sports group, or some other social group where people are likely to discuss ideas. Just as vertical propaganda requires lots of money to pay for mass communication, so horizontal propaganda requires a huge army of animators.

Horizontal propaganda has the essential feature of being identical to education in civic understanding and behavior, with special attention to politics. In the case of communism under Mao Zedong, political education was on the level of a catechism, but the overall aim was to "instill belief in a human type the propagandist wishes to create" (Ellul, 1973, p. 83). The important point about horizontal propaganda is that it has lasting effects, inculcating an important set of background beliefs while it gets each individual in the group to participate with the rest.

4 Irrational propaganda needs little explanation, because by definition propaganda in the negative sense operates by deception, seduction, bamboozlement, and the like. What needs explanation is the other category of propaganda with which it is paired, namely rational propaganda. If the communications are rational, isn't that the antithesis of propaganda? Not exactly, because what Ellul has in mind here are communications that have the appearance of rationality but may in fact be nonsense. For Ellul, the older style of appeal to emotion has given way to the dispassionate presentation of factual information. But this is no less propaganda when the facts, figures, charts, and so on are thoroughly misleading. Advertisements will provide technical information, say, about an automobile, but what most people retain is not the factual information but rather an image or general impression that, scientifically speaking, this object is a good buy. Facts and statistics comparing quality of life in different countries with different ideologies may impress people, but they don't necessarily give a balanced picture. Just "letting the facts speak" is a well-known way of misleading people through the selection of some facts and the omission of others, which have a contrary persuasive tendency. Even when the factual selection is honest, strict, and exact, the effect on the target audience may be irrational if that audience is not equipped to evaluate the data. Even when there is no intent to propagandize, the individual faced with an overload of scientific judgment loses the ability to apply personal judgment to the web of factual material. So the effect on the personality is the same as in the case of irrational propaganda. Hence the need to understand and recognize "rational propaganda," with a view to finding ways of recapturing our ability to discern and judge properly on matters affecting our lives.

Pre-propaganda

An important component of Ellul's theory of propaganda concerns what he calls pre-propaganda or sub-propaganda and connects with the idea of sociological propaganda as described above. No direct propaganda can take place without a set of

background myths, stereotypes, and shared attitudes. The analogy is with preparing the soil for sowing grain. Pre-propaganda is the tilling, propaganda the sowing. The work of pre-propaganda is the inculcation of sensitivities and conditionings, so that, at an appropriate time, the propagandist can make use of these to trigger the desired action by employing the appropriate buzzwords. If this sounds Pavlovian, it is because it is in part exactly that: a conditioned reflex. Ellul wrote long before the manipulations of the tobacco industry and its worldwide conspiracy were exposed in court documents, but we can see today how the refrain of freedom, repeated endlessly in cigarette advertising, helped to create in people's minds a deep association between smoking and freedom. The slogan "torches of freedom," used by Edward Bernays to market Lucky Strike cigarettes, is one among many examples.

A feature of pre-propaganda is that it is acquired slowly, so that a propagandist cannot usually afford to initiate it. It fits the category of sociological propaganda, where ideas and attitudes are self-generating among members of a given society. But a propagandist can build on preexisting myths, attitudes and feelings, as in the case of the United States and the co-opting by the tobacco industry of the already existing favorable attitude to freedom. Children in the USA have been brought up to swear allegiance to the flag and to an America where there is "liberty and justice for all." The anthem "My Country 'tis of Thee" ends with "from every mountainside let freedom ring." What the propagandist can do is further encourage reflections on freedom and tie these to marketing goals.

The modern-day Occupy movement that started with Occupy Wall Street in September 17, 2011, should probably be seen more in the light of pre-propaganda than propaganda. The leaders of this movement have not enunciated particular goals, but it is clear that they want to instill a different set of perceptions and linkages to counter those associating tax cuts and other advantages for the very wealthy with freedom. Government and laws can be oppressive, but there is also truth to Lacordaire's observation: "Between the strong and the weak, between the rich and the poor, between the lord and the slave, it is freedom that oppresses and the law that sets free." (For the source of this quotation and a spirited argument against its misinterpretation, see Georges Kaplan's open letter online at http://www.contrepoints.org/2012/03/31/75382-pour-en-finir-avec-la-celebre-citation-de-lacordaire.) Some forms of regulation and taxation can benefit the many and enhance their freedom.

Myths and presuppositions

Myth plays a central role in Ellulian propaganda analysis, but in a special sense of this term, which differs from the way in which we might speak of Roman or Greek mythology or the way in which "myth" is sometimes used simply to refer to a widespread false belief.

> By "myth" we mean an all-encompassing, activating image: a sort of vision of desirable objectives that have lost their material, practical character and have become strongly

> colored, overwhelming, all-encompassing, and which displace from the conscious all that is not related to it. (Ellul, 1973, p. 31)

Examples of myths that various propagandas have at different times instilled in people's minds include the myth of race, of the proletariat, of the Führer, of communist society, and of productivity. The point about these myths is that, when a myth is fully instilled, it takes possession of people's minds so completely that they "consecrate their lives to it." The image pushes people to action because it includes all that they feel is "good, just, and true." The process by which a myth gets established is a slow one, and corresponds to "political education" in the case of Mao or Lenin. The ready mobilization of a population will require both a collective myth and a conditioned reflex that can be triggered on the appropriate occasions.

Ellul sees in his own society (though I take him to include more than France) two great fundamental myths, science and history, on which all others rest. These others include myths of work, happiness, the nation, youth, and the hero. To be clear: he is not saying that any of these things are as such myths. His claim is that they have taken on, with the help of propaganda, a mythical character in people's minds. For Ellul, the image of science, seen through history, is one of bringing us endless progress, with progress itself taking on a mythological character. It is this kind of imagery that makes it easy for the masses to accept technological developments, whether in plant genetics and food processing, pharmaceuticals, fossil fuel extraction and consumption, nuclear power, or in other areas. Against this imagery, scientists who speak out about the risks and dangers of the new techniques have a difficult task.

Alongside the social myths and related to them is the category of what Ellul calls sociological presuppositions. These are "a collection of feelings, beliefs, and images by which one unconsciously judges events and things without questioning them, or even noticing them" (Ellul 1973, p. 39). For Ellul, there are four great collective sociological presuppositions in the modern world: that the aim in life, for human beings, is happiness; that human beings are naturally good; that history develops in endless progress; and that everything is matter. Here he is not claiming that these beliefs are held as philosophical theories, or that they are true; rather they are simply presupposed in social dealings of our time and express themselves in very concrete form. Propaganda has to fit in with these presuppositions and myths if it is to have any hope of succeeding. Ellul makes the somewhat audacious claim that "[a] propaganda that stresses virtue over happiness and presents man's future as one dominated by austerity and contemplation would have no audience at all" (Ellul, 1973, p. 40). This seems to be contradicted by Nazi propaganda, which often successfully promoted determination and austerity, but perhaps with a view to rejecting hedonism while seeking a different kind happiness, linked to action as distinct from contemplation.

Propaganda works by reflecting the existing myths and presuppositions and by taking them further, hardening and sharpening them to serve the propagandist's objectives. So normal feelings of patriotism get turned into a "raging nationalism"

where people are stimulated to action. At the time he wrote in 1962, Ellul felt that in France propaganda had to reflect the main elements of the ideology of the left. In 2012 we witness in the United States the harnessing of the idea of freedom by the right, to support various practices bringing un-freedom to the masses. If Ellul is right, an attempt to discredit "freedom" would not succeed, because it is too deeply engrained in US consciousness. The better strategy for the left would be to show how a good use of government regulation would *enhance* freedom. This would require constant harping on the theme "whose freedom?" That is where the introduction of the 99 percent versus 1 percent by the Occupy movement can be seen as an important accomplishment.

Timeliness

Apart from his original contributions to the understanding of propaganda, Ellul has useful observations on the workings of propaganda as conventionally understood. The dictum "to everything there is a season" applies to the possibilities for making propaganda as well. Propaganda must tap the deep currents of social belief and attitude; but, to rouse people to action, some special relation to current happenings will be needed – or, in Ellul's words, an appeal to "volatile immediacy," because people are sensitive only to contemporary events. Vichy's attempt during World War II to influence the French against the British by recalling Joan of Arc did not work, Ellul says, because it lacked immediacy and thereby met with indifference. Ellul speaks of the individual as being "at the mercy of events," in the sense that a conspicuous example can be exploited by propaganda with devastating effect. But memory quickly fades and the example has to be fresh in people's minds. Moreover, some new item of interest may completely displace public attention from anything else. Ellul gives here the example of how no students came to an important lecture on the atomic bomb in Bordeaux in 1957, simply because all attention was focused at the time on the success of Sputnik. When Krushchev presented an ultimatum to the West to solve the Berlin problem in three months, he allowed people enough time to forget about his threat, so that in 27 May 1959, when the time came for him to act, he could do nothing with no loss of face, despite having obtained nothing. He relied correctly on the public's forgetfulness.

Different words have different motivating power depending on the times. Certain "buzz words" resonate for a while and then lose their luster and energizing force. Timeliness is what will determine what "operational words" to use, with their "explosive and affective power." He gives as examples how, in Western Europe, each of the following words had strong operational power in the years mentioned: "Bolshevik," 1925; "Fascist," 1936; "Collaborator," 1944; "Peace," 1948. One is reminded of Czech President Vaclav Havel's story about how some Rip van Winkle speaker at a public gathering tried to enlist an outdated word to support a policy of preserving downtown Prague buildings. In the wake of the Czech liberation and repudiation of Soviet domination, he still managed to say that the preservation should take place "in the name of socialism." The crowd hooted

him down. In North America expressions such as "participatory democracy," "competition," "partnership," and "community" seem each of them to have times of advancing and receding popularity.

Besides the timeliness of certain words, there is also the matter of focal points of interest. The propagandist needs to relate a message to something people are deeply concerned about, if the message is to stick in their minds. Here the matter must be one of collective interest, because isolated interests don't translate into group action.

Truth

On the matter of truth in its relation to propaganda, Ellul prefers to speak of accuracy, factuality, and reality rather than "truth," because in going beyond the former one enters the area of interpretation and debatable matters. While commonly conceived of as "lies," propaganda often consists of factual truths, packaged and presented so as to encourage certain beliefs. The evidence may not support the conclusions, but artful propaganda will present it in such a way that the conclusions will be strongly suggested. Repetition may then result in the conclusions being treated as firm facts by a target audience. As Ellul writes: "The truth that pays off is in the realm of *facts*. The necessary falsehoods, which also pay off, are in the realm of *intentions* and *interpretations*. This is a fundamental rule of propaganda analysis" (Ellul, 1973, p. 53). In the case of propaganda using statistics, it often happens that figures are given that are unclear. A government statement that production has gone up by 30 percent can be very misleading if an anomalous base year is chosen for comparison. Often key matters that would allow for proper interpretation are deliberately suppressed. If the propagandist happens to be the government of the day, media friendly to the government will simply not challenge the presentation of misleading or confusing figures or other false information. An example confirming Ellul's analysis was mainstream media's uncritical reporting of Bush administration's accusations against Saddam Hussein prior to the beginning of war on March 20, 2003. Later discoveries vindicated the skeptics who had argued against alleged connections between Hussein and Al Qaeda and against Hussein's will and ability to use weapons of mass destruction against the USA.

For Ellul, an especially fertile field of propaganda activity is in the imputation of intentions. The reason is that it is very difficult to disprove such imputations, and yet they can rouse strong feelings of fear, anger, or hatred among a target audience. A small amount of uncertain factual information can be parlayed into a significant propaganda success in this way. Ellul had in mind the converse situation, where it was difficult to prove, in 1936 and until 1939, that Hitler desired war, when his speeches expressed a desire for peace. Ellul locates so much propaganda in the area of deceptive interpretation and false imputation of intention that he comes close to defining propaganda in that way: "Propaganda by its very nature is an enterprise for perverting the significance of events and of [*sic*] insinuating false intentions" (Ellul, 1973, p. 58). Much of the work of propaganda, Ellul claims, is designed to

provide a smokescreen behind which the real intentions of a government are hidden. He writes:

> [I]f the ruler wants to play the game by himself and follow secret policies, he must present a decoy to the masses. He cannot escape the mass; but he can draw between himself and that mass an invisible curtain, a screen, on which the mass will see projected the mirage of some politics, while the real politics are being made behind it. (Ellul, 1973, p. 122)

This analysis fits very well the case of the Bush administration's very different asserted reasons for going to war against Iraq in 2003 and the unstated reasons expressed in documents of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), a think tank many of whose members became part of, or influenced, the Bush administration. Decisions made by that administration make much more sense when seen as an attempt to give effect to PNAC's aims and policies.

Propaganda and Democracy

The whole of *Propaganda* (Ellul, 1973) is presented as a treatment in social science and not in ethics. Ellul offers the reader powerful arguments to the effect that leaders in a democracy cannot allow themselves to simply follow public opinion, because that is subject to change and in any case the public typically wants many things from government while not supporting the taxes to pay for them. In his view, government in a democracy has to engage in some effective persuasion or the democratic system will be overthrown by forces within or from outside the country. In Kantian ethics someone cannot be blamed for doing things that could not be avoided. But Ellul is adamant that in describing a sociological necessity he is not implying that there is ethical justification for what is done in accordance with the supposed necessity. His aim in the book is to present the reader with the problem of propaganda in its starkest form, so as to arouse awareness of the great difficulty the modern human has to preserve his or her freedom. The unstated premise of the book is that, if radical changes are not made to our way of thinking and being, technological society will continue to develop in the way it has done up until now. But elsewhere in his writings he does allow that, if radical changes are made to our thinking and being, the harmful effects of propaganda can be resisted. His message is that propaganda, being negatively defined, is not adequately countered by opposite propaganda, which is also of a negative kind. That would be like a person being hit in the head by a boxer on the left, and then by a boxer on the right. The effect is simply to make one groggy, not to improve that person's decision-making ability.

Ellul is a believer in genuine democracy, but he thinks that the word "democracy" has been treated in a way that turns it into a myth rather than a reality. In reality, democracy should imply the existence of free people able to make social and political decisions on the basis of good factual information. But in practice we find

too many political systems where the word "democracy" is trumpeted yet people are subjected to an endless repetition of false or misleading information, and where political choices are restricted by devices that filter out those who would challenge the technological system. The myths played upon by propaganda circulate freely through all kinds of media, making it very difficult for people to effect change that would restore human individuality and freedom.

A major source of inspiration for Ellul is Kierkegaard, and it is easy to see the similarity between Ellul's idea of the individual caught in the web of propaganda and Kierkegaard's disdain for the crowd mentality fostered by the press of his time. As Kierkegaard put it: "When truth conquers with the help of 10,000 yelling men – even supposing that that which is victorious is a truth: with the form and manner of the victory a far greater untruth is victorious" (Bretall, 1946, p. 431). In a similar vein, Ellul sees the mass-mediated person of his own time as deriving his or her opinions from the media. But care is needed to understand adequately the relation between the mass media and the individuals who become propagandized by them. Ellul was certainly aware of the power of the media to control people's minds. He was also aware of the increasing power of the media in the light of media concentration, as more and more newspaper, radio, and television outlets have come under the same ownership. Such concentration does not necessarily result in propaganda, but a basic uniformity of messages is a prerequisite for propaganda, and concentration facilitates that. The mass media are for the most part profit-oriented and will want to produce newspapers and programs that will bring large audiences and revenues. There are also owners who use their media to obtain political power. All of this explains the role of the media in purveying propaganda. There are the interests of owners, major advertisers, and important news sources. Large corporations, government departments, pressure groups, political parties, and the like all want the support of the mass media. A few years ago we saw recourse by US government departments to the use of Video News Releases supplied free to TV stations, to fool viewers into thinking that independently produced news was being provided. Not so: the news releases were made by the department and designed to reflect favorably on it, without the reader suspecting the real source. Retired armed forces military commanders often make statements to the media favorable to government military policies, without the reader or viewer knowing that these spokespeople often receive lucrative contracts or other benefits from the Pentagon, thus putting their credibility into question.

Paying attention to propaganda by and through the media gives us only part of the picture, though. A vital other component is the propagandee, who on Ellul's account turns out to be a willing collaborator in the propaganda process. The reason is that people, today as in the past, want to feel good about themselves and justified in what they think and do. In the modern world of democracy this means that they need to give the impression that they care about the world and bother to inform themselves about what is right and wrong with it, what needs to be done, and so on. But few people have the time, knowledge, and resources to investigate each social issue in the depth needed if one is to have a defensible opinion.

As a result, they are quite happy to accept a simple version of the truth on each issue, as long as they think that they will not be challenged and that their opinion is mainstream. So much has this become part of modern culture that one frequently hears on talk show radio or TV the dismissal of a point of view merely on the grounds that it is "far left" or "far right," as if nothing more needed to be said. Like Walter Lippmann in the 1920s, Ellul recognizes the problem of producing a journalism that avoids simplistic analysis and gives readers sufficient information so that they can make genuine choices. Lippmann recognized that the best journalism would cost more than readers would be able or willing to pay for. But Ellul goes further than Lippmann in analyzing why the masses won't support such journalism. It's not just that people don't like to have their basic beliefs and stereotypes challenged. They also have a need for the approval of others, and therefore for a short interpretation of current events that will make them seem knowledgeable and feel good. The American comedian Stephen Colbert invented or made popular the notion of "truthiness." Things that are "truthy," as distinct from true, have the quality of eminently seeming to be true, or feeling like the truth, whether or not there is a factual basis for them. For example, the public is easily made to think that tougher punishments and minimum mandatory sentences will reduce crimes, even if the evidentiary basis for this claim is weak or nonexistent.

Already in 1979 Ellul saw that techniques of mass communication were interfering with genuine dialogue and openness to uncertainty and creative expression (where, in line with strength of feeling, people may be inclined to exaggerate). But, with the increasing dominance of mass communications, "[r]eality and truth are now functions of what is broadcast" (Ellul, 1979, p. 152). Television news is intolerant of uncertainty and ambiguity. Viewers don't like to be confused. The result is a world of closed discourse encouraging the integration of the individual into an "objectivised technical system."

Ellul shares nineteenth-century British philosopher John Stuart Mill's abhorrence at the tendency to conformity in thought. Both of them especially prize the nonconforming person, who has thought issues through on his or her own, however eccentric the conclusions may seem to the passive-minded majority. Both of them uphold as a proper social goal the development to the maximum of the individual's capacities for judgment, self-examination, self-reliance, and so on. Ellul would include among worthwhile goals the development of the reasonable person (not the same as the rationalist; and Ellul makes room for faith as an important potential contributor to reasonableness). A reasonable person recognizes the limits and uncertainty of his or her sources of information and shows a certain intellectual humility, being ready to cede ground to others in the light of additional facts or better judgments. Such a person will value human institutions for their contributions to human welfare and will neither overvalue nor disdain them. It is clear that Ellul values religious faith – among other things, for its contribution to the spirit of self-scrutiny, humility, and concern for others. But he also explicitly rejects appeal to the irrational as the highest expression of the human, or as a means for political action (Ellul, 1963–1964, p. 330).

For Ellul, the key to resisting propaganda and to maintaining a genuine democracy lies in showing proper respect for one's adversaries, for minorities, and for others generally. This does not mean indifference, and it does not mean that all opinions are of equal value. It means rather giving special value to differing opinions, because these are what keep alive our need for dialogue and communication generally, both of which are essential to democracy. Propaganda works against dialogue and toward producing a uniform mass, suitable to the functioning of a technocratic system, but not for the fostering of genuine human existence. The end result of total propaganda is the complete denial of democracy and its replacement by some form of dictatorship.

Ethics and Propaganda

The previous section has implications for ethics. Placed in a highly propagandized environment, the ethical response, in Ellul's view, should be to find some way of resisting propaganda and of curtailing its effects without adding to it by simply providing a propaganda of one's own. The effects of total propaganda are soul-destroying, and one's primary concern should be to rehabilitate the critical and independent spirit of individuals.

But there are also more direct and immediate concerns. The media should be asking themselves whether their practices of simplifying stories so as to maximize appeal and boost ratings or circulation are in the best interests of democracy. Individuals whose occupation or experience gives them reason to reject some of the bromides advanced to pacify or distract people from taking concerted political action against corporate abuses of the environment, health, safety, and other public concerns should make an effort to make themselves heard.

Propaganda that seeks to persuade by engaging in some form of deception should be avoided. But it doesn't follow that an honest attempt to engage in propaganda, analyze it, and point out the ways in which it is factually inaccurate, selective, biased, or otherwise epistemically deficient should be avoided. On the contrary, for those who have the special knowledge or the ability to do the research to come up with the required knowledge, exposing deceptive propaganda for what it is may be an important civic duty.

In this light, it is interesting to see how Ellul makes his own contribution to countering anti-Israeli propaganda in the media during the 1980s (Ellul, 1985, pp. 79–152). Included in his defense of Israel is a lengthy list of journalistic sins of omission and commission, which, he argues, individually and cumulatively stack the deck against Israel. Readers of Noam Chomsky will be familiar with similar kinds of arguments against the media in North America, but directed to revealing pro-Israel bias. Ellul specifically states that his observations relate to French media, not to US media.

There is space only to include a brief sampling of Ellul's analyses. For the most part, the analyzed news stories and opinion articles fit the pattern of imputing

malevolent intentions to Israel when, as mentioned above, intentions are difficult to prove or disprove. The imputations can be made directly, by inference, or by suggestion. They can be accomplished by selective attention to Israel's misdeeds while ignoring equal or worse wrongdoings of hostile neighboring countries. They can result from ignoring or downplaying important historical facts. As always in the case of journalism and propaganda, the repetition of some truths to the exclusion of others can create distortions in public images relating to the attribution of responsibility for tragic happenings.

Here the present writer has difficulty assessing the validity of Ellul's claims, not having adequate historical and other factual knowledge. But, without endorsing those claims, it is useful to see the specific kind of factual matters that need careful watching. Ellul wrote, in 1984, that the French media treated Yasser Arafat as representing all Palestinians, when in his view they should have been more critical instead of endlessly repeating Arafat's views.

When Ellul remarks that headlines sometimes give seriously misleading impressions, we can all agree, without necessarily concurring with his specific interpretations. He gives as an example an interview with Syrian President Hafiz-al-Assad in *Le Monde*, August 2, 1984, where a headline boldly proclaimed that "[t]he US carries out policies determined by Israel," suggesting that Israel decides US policies in their entirety, whereas the story was not so unqualified.

Ellul also felt that the French press needed more balance in the comparisons it made between Israel's treatment of Arabs and South African Apartheid. Yes, Arabs in Israel have to carry identity cards and have separate license plates, but that is explained by the experience of terrorist attacks and by the infiltration of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The separate identification is not a mark of inferiority, in the way the Nazi requirement of a yellow badge was. Palestinians also have voting rights and representatives in the Knesset, and in some respects they are less "second-class citizens" than in surrounding Arab countries. Ellul also says that Arabs in Israel have freedom of movement and are not consigned to ghettoes – but this can be disputed in light of the construction of the wall in the occupied West Bank since the time Ellul wrote. What is true is that most people form pictures in their minds that are distortions of reality, and that the media are reluctant to give a full account of a complex situation because of the danger of boring readers. The distortions one notices in North American media are more likely to involve anti-Arab bias, as when many insurgents are wrongly labeled "terrorists."

Regarding accusations of Israel's alleged policy of officially sanctioned torture, Ellul comments that a huge campaign to that effect between 1977 and 1980 can be traced to the testimony of two individuals, Felicia Langer and Lea Tsemel. You certainly find examples of brutality and pressures applied in the questioning of suspects, Ellul says, but that can happen without there being an official policy supporting torture. Ellul observed that many different reports of torture were made in various media, but all of them were traceable to one source. The reader gets the impression that there can be no doubt about the claims for support for torture, because there are so many reports apparently adding confirmation to them.

But if the reports come from the same source, there is no added confirmation, but simply repetition. The present writer is not in a position to support or refute Ellul's specific claims, but in his experience it is most important to keep track of the sources for news and opinion in order to know how much weight to place on the likelihood of their being true.

Regarding the widely and rightly condemned massacres at Sabra and Chatilla in 1982, Ellul found the French media reporting at first that Israelis actually carried out the massacre. Later it turned out that the Phalangists had carried out the killings; but images of slain children were repeatedly broadcast and linked in viewers' minds with Israeli soldiers. Israelis were indeed the occupying power and they bore some responsibility for allowing the Phalangists to enter the Palestinian camps, although they knew that the Phalangists would be seeking revenge against the PLO for earlier killings of Phalangists. But such responsibility was indirect, and linked to the aim of removing weapons from the camp with minimal risk to the lives of Israeli soldiers. The media, misleadingly in Ellul's view, portrayed the Israelis in the role of Nazis, as if this were like the massacre of Oradour in France – a wanton revenge killing of many innocent persons. Nevertheless, Ellul appears to have overstated the facts, favoring Israel when he claimed that Israelis "were not involved, either actively or passively" (Ellul, 1988, p. 5). An Israeli investigation known as the Kahan Commission found Israel to have had indirect responsibility for the massacre and held Ariel Sharon personally responsible.

The above is only a small sampling of Ellul's critical treatment of the media in France around 1984. As someone who recognized propaganda technique when he came across it, he felt the need to bear witness to its use toward the denigration of Israel. One can certainly argue that, by omitting any reference to Israel's injustices toward Arabs in the West Bank, he himself is not supplying an adequate picture. But his arguments are tangible, and their openness to refutation allows for continued dialogue on the matter. They encourage the reader to acquire more detailed familiarity with the historical background and context, all of which helps to counter simplistic propaganda.

Concluding Remarks

In his defense of Israel and elsewhere (Ellul, 1982), Ellul shows himself to be not simply a detached, ivory tower academic, but a committed social activist dedicated to shaking the public out of its propaganda-induced torpor. His analysis is sophisticated, and it is carried out at two different levels. At one, more profound level, he takes aim at the total propaganda that in its many different forms seizes the modern individual and integrates him or her into a technological society. It is a propaganda that reduces or removes freedom and spontaneity from people's lives. At another level, he sees in the media particular forces at work to secure profit for private interests rather than serving democracy and the public good. In both cases the ethical response turns out to be exposure of the myths and deceptions involved,

self-examination, and a readiness to consider the evidence for different points of view rather than closing off access to contrary opinion. There is hard work involved in this mission, but none of the best minds that have thought about democracy has ever imagined that life under the democratic ideal would be easy.

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12

Lewis Mumford
Technics, Civilization, and Media Theory

Robert S. Fortner

I doubt that many of us, given the choice, would choose to live in pre-industrial societies. We are too accustomed to the conveniences and freedoms of the modern age. We do, however, recognize the deficits of industrial modernity – the development of efficient killing machines, the dangers of pollution and global warming, and the dislocations of people from their traditions, families, and lands as a result of the fluidity of nation-states, the construction and deconstruction of empires, or the revenge motivations of one group of people to respond to what they define as past injustices perpetrated by other groups, often with lethal effect.

Many scholars from different countries have tried to make sense of the changes that have resulted from the historical shift from premodern societies to those incorporating and depending on technological development. The shift in human consciousness occupied Max Weber, the change in social organization intrigued Émile Durkheim. The long historical progression of change stimulated Arnold Toynbee, and the development of a new society and new ways of life by waves of immigrants occupying a foreign land interested Daniel Boorstin. But it was not merely sociologists and historians who tried to explain what had happened to European and North American societies. So did cultural critics, philosophers, anthropologists, and many other scholars from various disciplines – some of which (such as acoustic ecology) seemed to develop for the express purpose of making sense of new realities.

Among those who addressed the issues of industrialization, mechanization, and technics were familiar names: John Ruskin, Karl Marx, Siegfried Gideon, Walter Benjamin, Patrick Geddes, Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Jacques Ellul, Daniel Bell, and many others – including Lewis Mumford. Despite his personal affection

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for the work of Harold Innis, James W. Carey identified Mumford, along with Marshall McLuhan, as the two minds that birthed "modern media analysis," saying of Mumford that he "shared with Geddes the intellectual strategy of placing technological change at the center of the growth of civilization" (Carey, 1979, p. 19).

Although media ecologists have claimed Mumford as one of their own as a result of his book *Technics and Civilization* (Mattern, 2004, p. 2), it is not that aspect of Mumford's work that I want to emphasize here. Instead I want to pick up a different strand of Mumford's writing, one that builds on the cultural criticism associated with Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and William Morris and on the social criticism of William Booth, Herbert Read, Jacob Riis, Friedrich Engels, and Patrick Geddes. All of these authors, writing from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, criticized the results of the industrial revolution for cities, for the poor, and for the nature of civilization. They feared, in one way or another, the moral depravity that resulted from industrialized and urbanized society. They feared, or advocated, revolution from those who had been marginalized and brutalized by the requirements of mechanized production (crowded slums, lack of sanitation, education, the moral teachings they would have received in a more pastorally oriented church, grinding poverty, and ill health).

A couple of examples of the rhetoric about civilization to provide a flavor of such criticism will have to suffice. William Booth of the Salvation Army wrote in 1890 that the "terrible picture" that Stanley Livingston had provided about the Congo might apply equally to England (Booth, 1890, pp. 11–12):

> while brooding over the awful presentation of life as it exists in the vast African forest, it seemed to me only too vivid a picture of many parts of our own land. As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England? Civilisation, which can breed its own barbarians, does it not also breed its own pygmies? May we not find a parallel at our own doors, and discover within a stone's throw of our cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley found existing in the great Equatorial forest?

Henry Mayhew, writing in 1861–1862, called the "brutish ignorance" of London costers (street hawkers) a "national disgrace," and an "evil of our own creation" (Mayhew, 1968, p. 22), while Friedrich Engels, writing more than a decade earlier, had summarized facts that, he said, had been revealed by "our enquiries" as follows (Engels, 1968, pp. 86–87):

> The workers are not given the means whereby they can make satisfactory and permanent provision for their families. Even the most highly-skilled worker is therefore continually threatened with the loss of his livelihood and that means death by starvation. And many do indeed die in this way. The working-class quarters of the towns are always badly laid out. Their houses are jerry-built and are kept in a bad state of repair. They are badly ventilated, damp and unhealthy. The workers are herded into the smallest possible space and in most cases members of (at the least) one family sleep together in a single room … The workers' diet is generally poor and often almost

> inedible. From time to time many workers' families actually go short of food and in exceptional cases they actually die of hunger.

Mumford was equally critical of the situation created by industrialization. He wrote in 1938 (Mumford, 1970a, pp. 166, 183):

> Not merely were the new cities as a whole bleak and ugly, environments hostile to human life even at its most elementary physiological level, but the standardized overcrowding of the poor was repeated in middle class dwellings and in the barracks of soldiers, classes which were not being directly exploited for the sake of profit … The standardization of the factory-slum was the chief urban achievement of the nineteenth century. Wherever the steam engine, the factory, and the railroad went, an impoverished environment usually went with them …

At first glance neither Mumford's nor his predecessors' remarks have anything to do with communication. They tell us nothing about the results of industrialization for media. But this conclusion is too facile, too narrow.

What all of these authors share is moral outrage against the consequences of industrialization for civilization. There was a relationship between the moral psychology of people and the environment within which they lived. The spreading ugliness of cities (both physically and sociologically), as John De La Valette put it (1935, p. 3) was "a crime and a root of further evil." The shape of the city, in other words, was a function of its use, with the industrial revolution calling for uses and resulting in an aesthetics that were dehumanizing at their core.

Mumford's criticism of the architecture of cities was rooted in his conviction that the culture of the West had been corrupted by mechanization. What had occurred was that a mindset had developed in which the "values" of the machine – efficiency in particular – had come to rule over decision making in all spheres of human activity. The problem with architecture was that it was difficult, if not impossible, to correct it as a container of human activity. If architecture was anti-human, if increasing numbers of people were forced by industrialization and urbanization to live in inhuman environments, then the possibilities for reform, for re-humanization, were rendered moot. The diminishing of ordinary people by the inhuman scale of modern architecture, its rigidity, its lack of art or connection to former ways of life, its lack of attention to basic human needs for safety, health, sanitation, provisions for privacy and healthy food preparation, all militated against a culture of humanity. Mumford claimed that "[t]he wisdom of the race revolted against the inhuman fruits of its knowledge." Referencing such luminaries as Arnold, Emerson, Whitman, Melville, Dickens, Zola, Tolstoy, Ibsen and others, he remarked that

> almost all the representative minds of Europe and America … denounced the human results of the whole process of mechanization and physical conquest. As with one voice, they protested against the inhuman sacrifices and brutalizations, the tawdry materialisms, the crass neglect of the human personality. (Mumford, 1973, pp. 414, 415)

As he explained it,

> there is no consummation of life except in the perpetual growth and renewal of the human person: machines, organizations, institutions, wealth, power, culture, cities, landscapes, industries, are all secondary instruments in that process. Whatever nourishes the personality, humanizes it, refines it, deepens it, intensifies its aptitude and broadens its field of action is good: whatever limits it or thwarts it, whatever sends it back into tribal patterns and limits its capacity for human co-operation and communion must be counted as bad. (Mumford, 1973, p. 415)

Communication, language, symbolization, and media had played major roles in the development of this dehumanizing culture, not merely because they formed an ecology that directed people's interpretations (although they did that as well), but because they were agents of mechanization, means by which mechanization was rationalized. This process and its current implications will be the focus of the remainder of this essay.

There are two starting points to Mumford's analysis. The first is the centrality of symbolization to the development of the human being. In this approach he takes a position congruent with those of Suzanne Langer and Ernst Cassirer. Mumford (1967, p. 83) argued that "the passage from the symbolic translation of immediate things and events to creating new entities and situations within the mind, purely by the manipulation of symbols" was the final step in creating "the fundamental magic of speech." An even more potent magic, he continued, "might bring into the mind events that had ceased, or project entirely new experiences," an open language that was "full of endless potentialities … When language had reached this point, both past and future became a living part of the present." And this, of course, was a reality that was not experienced by less sentient beings.

> In short, without man's cumulative capacity to give symbolic form to experience, to reflect upon it and re-fashion it and project it, the physical universe would be as empty of meaning as a handless clock: its ticking would tell nothing. The mindfulness of man makes the difference. (Mumford, 1967, p. 35)

The second starting point was the ritual – which, In Mumford's view, even preceded language as the basis for creating human solidarity and community.

> The original purpose of ritual was to create order and meaning where none existed; to affirm them when they had been achieved; to restore them when they were lost. What an old-fashioned rationalist would regard as "meaningless ritual" was rather, on this interpretation, the ancient foundation layer of all modes of order and significance. (Mumford, 1967, p. 62)

Not only that, but

> Ritual promoted a social solidarity that might otherwise have been lost through the uneven development of human talents and the premature achievement of individual differences.

> Here the ritual act established the common emotional response that made man more ready for conscious cooperation and systematic ideation. (Mumford, 1967, p. 63)

Ritual was significant work for humankind – "sacred work." And this sacred work, which created a reality, "a realm apart," for humans, served "as a connecting link between the seen and the unseen, the temporal and the eternal," and "was one of the decisive steps in the transformation of man," we might even say the basis for the creation of the "human" part of the human being (Mumford, 1967, p. 67).

Mumford saw these two elements of the human experience – the use of ritual and the development of language, both of which provided connections to the unseen through symbolic work – as "the chief means of maintaining order and establishing human identity" (Mumford, 1967, p. 78). They were crucial, non-negotiable, in terms of understanding the crucial follow-ons: art, culture, politics, economic and social relationships, the construction of community, the role of religion, and so on, in human life. These were the equivalent of Marx's "base," all else being superstructure that developed from these essential foundational components.

Mumford identifies one part of this superstructure in the political realm: kingship. It was under kingship, he says, that "civilization" developed.

> Its chief features, constant in varying proportions throughout history, are the centralization of political power, the separation of classes, the lifetime division of labor, the mechanization of production, the magnification of military power, the economic exploitation of the weak, and the universal introduction of slavery and forced labor for both industrial and military purposes. These institutions would have completely discredited both the primal myth of divine kingship and the derivative myth of the machine had they not been accompanied by another set of collective traits … (Mumford, 1967, p. 186)

And it is here that Mumford introduces communication. The collective traits he identifies here are:

> the invention and keeping of the written record, the growth of visual and musical arts, the efforts to widen the circle of communication and economic intercourse far beyond the range of any local community: ultimately the purpose to make available to all men the discoveries and inventions and creations, the works of art and thought, the values and purposes that any single group has discovered. (Mumford, 1967, p. 186)

What Mumford recognizes here is the essential role played by communication media and connectivity in bolstering the collection of power and effecting the redistribution of that power across space. The control of communication legitimizes the exercise of centralized power. The success, then, of whatever was undertaken by the institution of kingship depended on the adroit use of symbolic work and its reification through ritual and art. This included the idea of deification of the king – divine kingship.

The legitimacy of divine kingship allowed the use of power to create complex machines, at first using human beings as elements and later substituting "more reliable mechanical parts" for these human elements (Mumford, 1967, p. 188). "Only kings, aided by the discipline of astronomical science and supported by the sanctions of religion, had the capability of assembling and directing the megamachine" (p. 189).

> If one single invention was necessary to make this larger mechanism operative for constructive tasks as well as for coercion [through the army], it was probably the invention of writing. This method of translating speech into graphic record not merely made it possible to transmit impulses and messages throughout the system, but to fix accountability when written orders were not carried out. (Mumford, 1967, p. 192)

Not only were the development of the megamachine under the collective power of divine kingship and the justificatory and legitimizing control of written language and its symbolic efficacy inseparably intertwined in Mumford's analysis (shades of Harold Innis), but he went further to argue that, "without intuitions and memories, without ancient cultural landmarks, the intelligence is enfeebled, and the report it gives on its own say-so is so incomplete, so qualitatively inadequate, so structurally distorted that it becomes downright false" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 75). Power, the megamachine, and symbolic language itself depended on the long cultural history of humankind. In other words, it was not merely the mastery of science or technology that provided the necessary elements to tame nature, construct societies, or rule people, but it was the traditions of culture and their symbolic significance in human history that made such feats possible. Depending on that which was observable and controllable (behavioral, technical, scientific) was inadequate, as Mumford put it, "defective" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 75).

One reason for this defectiveness was that, by ignoring the nonutilitarian elements of mastery and creation, the technocentric mind would miss the true significance of these acts:

> the areas in which technical skill and engineering audacity were highest, namely, in the massive Romanesque and the towering Gothic cathedrals, drew on the oldest parts of our technical heritage, and were associated directly, not with any utilitarian purpose, but solely with attempts to add significance and beauty to the necessitous round of daily life.… The ultimate end of such a magnificent technical effort was not the building alone but the vision it promoted: a sense of the meanings and values of life. (Mumford, 1970b, pp. 134–135)

Losing sight of the true reality of creation responsive to cultural history and the meaning and significance that creation had within a nonutilitarian world was, to Mumford, the root of the impoverished nature of the modern world. What had at one time been development within what he called a "polytechnic" culture – responsive to "the needs,

aptitudes, interests of living organisms: above all on man himself" – had been the development of mere "monotechnics, based upon scientific intelligence and quantitative production, directed mainly toward economic expansion, material repletion, and military superiority" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 155).

Yet there was still one further step taken by the monotechnic culture: the ultimate repudiation of what had given humankind meaning and significance. This step in the process of mechanization was the development of "an ideology that gave absolute precedence and cosmic authority to the machine itself" (shades of Jacques Ellul). He explained it thus:

> When an ideology conveys such universal meanings and commands such obedience, it has become, in fact, a religion, and its imperatives have the dynamic force of a myth. Those who would question its principles or defy its orders do so at their peril, as groups of rebellious workers continued to discover … (Mumford, 1970b, pp. 157–158)

This ideology based on "new ideas of order and power and predictability" dominated mechanical world thinking, making its way

> into every human activity. Within the last four centuries the older tradition of polytechnics was replaced by a system that gave primacy to the machine, with its repetitive motions, its depersonalized processes, its abstract quantitative goals. The later enlargement of these technical possibilities through electronics has only increased the scope and coercive absolutism of the system. (Mumford, 1970b, p. 164)

The principal value of this monotechnic culture was the conquest of nature. And Mumford thought this an immoral value:

> To conquer nature is in effect to remove all natural barriers and human norms and to substitute artificial, fabricated equivalents for natural processes: to replace the immense variety of resources offered by nature by more uniform, constantly available products spewed forth by the machine. (Mumford, 1970b, pp. 172–173)

And the subsidiary "postulates" of this mechanistic culture? "There is only one efficient speed, *faster*; only one attractive destination, *farther away*; only one desirable size, *bigger*; only one rational quantitative goal, *more*" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 173). Under this culture, too, it was not merely the development of novelties that was the problem. Rather it was the imperative to surrender to these novelties "unconditionally," merely because they were offered "without respect to their human consequences" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 186).

What happens when the human imperatives of culture – the need for meaning, symbolic understanding of consequences for humanity itself, a connection with the multidimensional realities (that emerged in polytechnic culture according to Mumford), and people's need for a human scale to civilization – are lost? Mumford saw nothing short of totalitarianism: a world where terror, torture, and mass extermination were the

norm, where democracies (the supposedly "civilized nations") were co-opted and "copied the abominable fascist practice of indiscriminately exterminating civilian populations" through firebombing and, ultimately, through the atomic bomb (Mumford, 1970b, p. 233) – a situation, in other words, where human beings were merely pawns in a monotechnic cultural reality dominated by the megamachine.

> The ideology that underlies and unites the ancient [Egyptian divine kings] and the modern megamachine is one that ignores the needs and purposes of life in order to fortify the power complex and extend its dominion. Both megamachines are oriented toward death. (Mumford, 1970b, p. 260)

Some results of such an orientation are perhaps obvious. But Mumford was more comprehensive than what might seem immediately apparent. He argued that the mechanistic mentality had not only affected the military and politics, but also elementary education and mass media – both of which had become agents of indoctrination (for example, through propaganda). "The stamp of mechanical regularity," he wrote,

> lies in the face of every human unit. To follow the program, to obey instructions, to "pass the buck," to be uninvolved as a person in the needs of other persons, to limit responses to what lies immediately, so to say, on the desk, to heed no relevant human considerations, however vital: never to question the origin of an order or inquire as to its ultimate destination: to follow through every command, however irrational, to make no judgements of value or relevance about the work in hand, finally to eliminate feelings or emotions or rational moral misgivings that might interfere with the immediate dispatch of work – these are the standard duties of the bureaucrat: these are the conditions under which Organization Man flourishes, a virtual automaton within a collective system of automation. (Mumford, 1970b, p. 278)
>
> Already these faithful servants of the megamachine have taken for granted that there is only one acceptable view of the world, that which they stand for: only one kind of knowledge, only one type of enterprise has value – their own, or that which derives directly from their own. Ultimately they mean that only one kind of personality can be considered desirable – that established as such by the military–industrial–scientific elite which will operate the megamachine. (Mumford, 1970b, p. 281)

Mumford considered the culture of modernity to be in a "dangerously unbalanced state," which was "producing warped and unbalanced minds." Technological civilization was developing apace, while "all other components, geographical, biological, anthropological," had been "supplanted by technology" that would result either in man becoming "a willing creature of this technology or cease to exist" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 283). A bit apocalyptic in outlook, perhaps, but Mumford's perspective, to a greater or lesser degree, coincided with those of many others who wrote about the human condition in the twentieth century. Siegfried Giedion identified the trends in the workplace initiated by Frederick Taylor as experiments in how far the human body could be "transformed into a mechanism" to increase

efficiency (Giedion, 1948, p. 98), and the farmer, whom Mumford had also identified as a beacon of the polytechnic world, as one who had been forever altered by mechanization (Giedion, 1948, p. 131).

David Landes, although not sharing the apocalyptic vision of Mumford, agreed that "the one ingredient of modernization that is just about indispensable is technological maturity and the industrialization that goes with it; otherwise it has the trappings without the substance, the pretence without the reality … Change is demonic"; however, he continued,

> it creates, but it also destroys … the Industrial Revolution tended, especially in its earlier stages, to widen the gap between the rich and poor and sharpen the cleavage between employer and employed, thereby opening the door to class conflicts of unprecedented bitterness … In similar fashion, the Industrial Revolution generated painful changes in the structure of power. It did not create the first capitalists, but it did produce a business class of unprecedented numbers and strength. (Landes, 1969, p. 7)

Maxwell Fry (1969, pp. xx–xxi), introducing his book, commented that "we are strongly emotionalised in favour of science and its derivative technology, we try to solve every problem scientifically and fail, blinding ourselves in the process to the existence of any alternative." His examination of the differences between what he called "instinctive architecture," or that which had emerged organically in different societies using natural materials and solving local needs, and modern architecture, which was part of "the industrial reproductive system," resulted, he said, in the loss of harmony between man and the conditions that surrounded him, and which he celebrated in art, "never losing at any point the vital connection between hand and mind." But this connection had been severed, "for as long as we continue to exalt rational thought over all other kinds, the link between man and his surroundings" would "leave him bereft in a world with which he has less and less communication" (Fry, 1969, p. 23).

Finally, Jacques Ellul. He wrote in his second major book on technology, *The Technological System* (Ellul, 1980, p. 35), that technological mediation has become exclusive, displacing "the whole set of complex and fragile bonds that man has patiently fashioned – poetic, magic, mythical, symbolic bonds." Then, continuing, he wrote:

> there is only the technological mediation, which imposes itself and becomes total. Technology then forms both a continuous screen and a generalized mode of involvement. Technology is in itself not only a means, but a universe of means – in the original sense of *Universum*: both exclusive and total … Human relations can no longer be left to chance. They are no longer the object of experience, of tradition, of cultural codes, of symbolism. Everything has to be exposed … elucidated, then transformed into applicable technological schemata … This is done in such a way that each individual adds his construction and also plays the exact role that is expected of him. Only then does he have full gratification for himself, and the others are gratified by his conforming behavior. (Ellul, 1980, p. 35)

This is not to say that these authors, or others like them, all agreed on the specifics that resulted from mechanization, the megamachine, or the development of technology. But I do mean to say that all of them recognized that something had gone badly wrong as history continued, and that they all saw that the rise of the machine was a crucial component of that wrong. But it was not merely the existence of edifices of stone, or machines of steel, that led them to their conclusions. Rather it was the type of mind that produced these edifices and machines and displaced the reality-creating mental structures (the playful language, the symbol and ritual, prayer, and myth) that had for millennia of human history provided meaning to the human experience. As Ellul suggested, the new mentality was totalizing, not only rising to rival the earlier traditions, but grinding them into nothingness; for it could brook no opposition.

What was more troubling to Mumford was the moral vacuity of the change. "By turns the steamboat, the railroad, the postal system, the electric telegraph, the airplane, have been described as instruments that would transcend local weaknesses, redress inequalities or natural and cultural resources, and lead to a worldwide political unity …" (Mumford, 1970b, p. 296). To this list we could add the development of wireless telegraphy, the telephone, the radio, the phonograph, the film, the television, and satellite-delivered media.

> Once technical unification was established, human solidarity, "progressive" minds believed, would follow. In the course of two centuries, these hopes have been discredited. As the technical gains have been consolidated, moral disruptions, antagonisms, and collective massacres have become more flagrant, not in local conflicts alone but on a global scale. (Mumford, 1970b, p. 296)

And so Mumford dismissed Marshall McLuhan's "global village" as a "humbug" (p. 297).

A variety of tools were used in the new monotechnic society to assure compliance. Some, such as propaganda, the military, and education, have already been mentioned. But there was also a safety valve, counter-balancing "regimentation by encouraging a primitive violence of the passions, by giving play to an untempered eroticism, by turning the external environment into a fairyland to sensuous delight. In short, despotism needed both the Prison and the Carnival," the most useful of these being the Carnival (Mumford, 1973, p. 178).

> Here, then, is the modern world, with its over-charges of empty stimuli, its perpetual miscarriage of technique, its materialistic repletion, its costly ritual of conspicuous waste, its highly organized purposelessness: here is a veritable clinical picture of the cultural disease from which that world suffers. (Mumford, 1973, p. 380)

The recognition of this cultural disease returned Mumford to one of his principal endeavors – the examination of the city. It was in the city that the cultural disease could be seen most clearly. His history of the city recognized the role of the "citadel,"

the locus of power in the city and the symbol of protection for people otherwise exposed to the ravishing of armies as one city vied with another to extend its power. Coupled with divine kingship, however, the citadel led to unforeseen results – for instance, that "the dead took precedence over the living" (Mumford, 1961, p. 82). Despite their sometimes negative consequences, however, towns and cities continued to grow so that, by the time "typical" medieval towns developed, they had, through most of their existence, "a far higher standard for the mass of the population than any later form of town, down to the first romantic suburbs of the nineteenth century" (Mumford, 1961, p. 289).

The reason for the deterioration was the rise of "coketown," the industrial city based on the development of steam power for factories and transportation: the locomotive – the efficient use of such power to aggregate multiple pollution-spewing factories along rivers for water and near population centers for surplus and cheap labor, thus increasing urbanization (see Mumford, 1961, p. 456). "The main elements in the new urban complex were the factory, the railroad, and the slum (p. 458). These new cities were developed on utilitarian principles, denigrating art and religion and "intelligent political administration" that might have provided "police and fire protection, water and food inspection, hospital care, or education," none of which were part of the early development of coketowns (pp. 458–459).

Mumford was brutal in his descriptions of the results of coketown for those who lived within them: "a pitch of foulness and filth was reached [in living quarters] that the lowest serf's cottage scarcely achieved in medieval Europe," "the privies, foul beyond description," "rats that carried bubonic plague, the bedbugs that infested the beds and tormented sleep, the lice that spread typus, the flies that visited impartially the cellar privy and the infant's food … an almost ideal breeding medium for bacteria" (p. 462), "absence of plumbing and municipal sanitation" (p. 463).

> Not merely were the new cities as a whole bleak and ugly, environments hostile to human life even at its own most elementary physiological level, but the standardized overcrowding of the poor was repeated in middle-class dwellings and in the barracks of soldiers, classes that were not being directly exploited for the sake of profit. (Mumford, 1961, p. 463)

What this amounted to was an environment so foul that any thoughts of art, religion, ritual, tradition and traditional symbols and meaning would be ludicrous.

> [B]uildings speak and act, no less than the people who inhabit them; and through the physical structures of the city past events, decisions made long ago, values formulated and achieved [in the city], remain alive and exert an influence. (Mumford, 1961, p. 113)
>
> [I]n industrial housing there are certain common characteristics. Block after block repeats the same formation: there are the same dreary streets, the same shadowed, rubbish-filled alleys, the same absence of open spaces for children's play and gardens;

> the same lack of coherence and individuality to the local neighborhood. The windows are usually narrow; the interior light insufficient; no effort is made to orient the street pattern with respect to sunlight and winds. (Mumford, 1961, p. 465)

Not only did mechanization provide the means and the financial incentives for this exploitation. Not only did it take over the mind, forcing people into numbing tenements of despair. Not only did it make any effort to beautify or celebrate laughable. It also provided the machines that were the means of control for the entire system: the typewriter, high-speed stenography,

> mechanical means of communication: mechanical means of making and manifolding the permanent record: mechanical systems of audit and control – all these devices aided the rise of a vast commercial bureaucracy, capable of selling in ever-remoter territories by establishing the fashionable patterns of the metropolis as identical with civilization itself, or with anything that could be called "real life." (Mumford, 1961, p. 534)

A "new trinity" developed and "dominated the metropolitan scene: finance, insurance, advertising" (p. 535).

> The swish and crackle of paper is the underlying sound of the metropolis. What is visible and real in this world is only what has been transferred to paper or has been further etherized on a microfilm or a tape recorder. The essential daily gossip of the metropolis is no longer that of people meeting face to face at a cross-roads, at the dinner table, in the marketplace: a few dozen people writing in the newspapers, a dozen or so more broadcasting over radio and television, provide daily interpretation of movements and happenings with slick professional adroitness. Thus even the most spontaneous human activities come under professional surveillance and centralized control. (Mumford, 1961, pp. 546–547)

To Mumford, then, the mechanization of life, especially in the city, was dependent on the control of the means of communication. These means included not only the traditional media named above but also the plan and architecture of cities, the loss of traditional means of expression, and the creation of new forms of ritual and new containers for expression to replace what was lost as a result of the mechanization. Mechanization was not merely the result of machine development. As a matter of fact, the development of machines was itself merely one result of mechanization. As his biographer put it:

> For Mumford, then, the emergence of the machine was fundamentally a mental revolution, a movement from organic to mechanical thinking … Mumford's refusal to see the machine as a force independent of human will and purpose explains the underlying optimism of *Technics and Civilization*. Rejecting all forms of technological or economic determinism, he insists that human desires, decisions, and dreams influenced the course of modern invention fully as much as invention influenced the modern sensibility. Our modern machine world was a creation of human effort and will,

> and any thoroughgoing chance would first involve a change in values and social priorities. (Miller, 1989, p. 329)

The essence of mechanization was in the mind: the organic rhythms and expressions, lifestyles and relationships, that had existed in the pre-paleotechnic period were gradually turned, through the means of expression, themselves increasingly mechanized, into a new style of life disconnected from art, religion, myth, and natural connections.

The forces of annihilation and extermination were, to Mumford, ascendant. The collection of people into cities allowed those in control to master other men for the purpose of extending their control to even other cities (Mumford, 1961, p. 558). Thus Mumford echoed the complaints of both Harold Innis and Jacques Ellul.

> Never before has the "citadel" exercised such atrocious power over the rest of the human race. Over the greater part of history, the village and the countryside remained a constant reservoir of fresh life, constrained indeed by the ancestral patterns of behavior that had helped make men human, but with a sense of both human limitations and human possibilities. No matter what the errors or aberrations of the rulers of the city, they were still correctable. Even if whole urban populations were destroyed, more than nine-tenths of the human race still remained outside the circle of destruction. Today this factor of safety is gone: the metropolitan explosion has carried both the ideological and the chemical poisons of the metropolis to every part of the earth; and the final damage may be irretrievable. (Mumford, 1961, p. 559)
>
> Modern man is the victim of the very instruments he values most. Every gain in power, every mastery of natural forces, every scientific addition to knowledge, has proved potentially dangerous because it has not been accompanied by equal gains in self-understanding and self-discipline. We have sought to achieve perfection by eliminating the human element. Believing that power and knowledge were by nature beneficent or that men himself was [*sic*] inherently good when freed from external obligations to goodness, we have conjured up a genius capable of destroying our civilization. The disproportionate development of the sciences themselves only hastens this malign end. (Mumford, 1973, p. 393)

It is tempting to dismiss Mumford's writings as unduly pessimistic, written at a time when nuclear annihilation seemed but a button-push away. And certainly Mumford was influenced by his time, including the "doomsday clock" created by the Union of Concerned Scientists, fears triggered by the blockade of Cuba after discovery of Soviet-built missiles and nuclear warheads there, the police action of Korea and the domino-theory justifications for the Vietnam conflict, along with the atrocities of World War II. But it would be a mistake to dismiss him as a crank, for not only does Mumford fit within an academic context that birthed media ecology, the social dimensions of technology, and the critique of French postmodernists, but his conclusions have largely proven to be accurate and unchallenged, although perhaps too little known.

What might Mumford say to some of the longstanding debates about the media, for instance? On the issue of media bias, he would say that whatever bias does or does not

exist is a sideshow, beside the point, hardly worth debating, and largely uncorrectable without a deeper understanding of the means by which news is constructed. Even on the issue of media ownership, championed by such recent media luminaries as Robert McChesney, Noam Chomsky, or Bill Moyers, Mumford would say that, while the concentration of ownership is a fact and worrisome for what it portends about knowledge and the future, it is merely a symptom of the real problem: the mechanistic mindset that has developed in the effort to control destiny through an amoral science and the expectation that humankind can solve its own created problems through ever more control. Science seeks to stop the developing chaos in its tracks, he might say, even while it is responsible for creating the chaos. Those who see technocratic control as the appropriate response to urban dehumanization are unaware or purposely ignorant of their own roles in creating the contexts and incentives for such dehumanization. He would say that the means to re-humanize the world and to respond effectively to the mess that humankind has created for itself is not to argue over whose fault it is, or which new panacea is the right one to reverse the destruction, but to accept that there are fundamental rhythms, commitments, values, and principles that create the basis for humankind's humanity – its relationships, communities, mentalities, and understandings – and that these rhythms, commitments, values, and principles are not enhanced by the mechanization of people's minds or by applying efficiency to all problems or expecting corporate or bureaucratic control mechanisms to respond effectively to the morass they have created. The reversal, the reconstruction of organic lifestyles, can only be achieved through nontechnocratic and nonscientific means: art, ritual, religion, myth, and identification of the inherent human needs of people. Mumford was not opposed to indoor plumbing, the extension of electricity, or the development of modern means of transportation. But he did ask that, before any technical means of supporting human life and community are adopted, their ethics be examined, the basic subjectivity of science and technology be recognized rather than reified.

> The essence of industrialization, Mumford perceptively points out, is not the introduction of machinery on a large scale but the monopolization of technical knowledge by an elite of scientists and experts, and the appearance of a more regimented way of organizing work and life. These developments, in turn, coincided with the maturation of capitalism and the spread of a new personality type, Max Weber's Organization Man, the supinely loyal bureaucrat willing to surrender his soul to the system he served … Unlike so many historians of technology, he emphasized the interplay between technological change and related changes in values and social relations, recognizing that the latter are often the precondition, not the consequence, of large-scale mechanization. (Miller, 1989, p. 538)

As media and mass communication continue to be ever more technologized, this is the value of Mumford's work to theory development: the long view, not an ad hoc response to every new issue that emerges as a result of technological change, the view that recognizes that the human psyche needs grounding in nontechnological thinking, which provides true understanding and gives meaning to every life.

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13

The Impact of Ethics on Media and Press Theory

Clifford G. Christians

The issue in this chapter is whether ethics has to be included for media and press theories to be complete. If the overall goal is to understand communication structures and phenomena, does theory need ethics? Is there an answer to this? Is it even a productive question? Should scholarship be measured by its statistical sophistication or by the extent to which it illuminates social crises? If ethics is considered irrelevant to theory construction and only relevant later, does playing catch-up mean its agenda is limited, even inconsequential? These are the questions, as this chapter examines the role of ethics in developing media and press theory.

The issue of ethics and media theory has its roots in the Enlightenment. The dichotomy between facts and values dominated the Enlightenment mind, and this dualism carried over into social science theorizing and from there into communication theorizing. Interpretive studies is attempting to restore ethics to the theoretical center of the mainstream model, as counter-Enlightenment initiatives that integrate ethics into theory are occurring in social responsibility theory, cultural studies, and sociological propaganda. These fields provide a positive answer to the questions of this chapter, showing us that, for communication studies to have explanatory power, it is imperative that ethics be included in theory construction.

Mainstream Communication Theory

Mainstream empiricism

The fact–value dichotomy dominated the Enlightenment mind. Isaac Newton's *Principia mathematica* of 1687 described the world as a lifeless machine built on uniform natural causes in a closed system, and Newton inspired the eighteenth century

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as much as anyone. Descartes' (1596–1690) *cogito ergo sum* assumed the existence of clear and distinct ideas, objective and neutral, apart from anything subjective. The physical universe became the only legitimate domain of knowledge. On the positive side, this state of affairs unlocked in people an excitement to explore and rule the natural world that formerly had controlled them. Natural science played a key role in setting people free. Achievements in mathematics, physics, and astronomy provided unmistakable evidence that, by applying reason to nature and to human beings in fairly obvious ways, people could live progressively happier lives. Science gained a stranglehold on truth through its ideology of hard data versus subjective values.

The Enlightenment pushed values to the fringe through its radical disjunction between knowledge of what is and what ought to be. Enlightenment rationalism isolated reason from faith, knowledge from belief. As Robert Hooke insisted three centuries ago, when he helped found London's Royal Society, "[t]his Society will eschew any discussion of religion, rhetoric, morals, and politics" (Hooke, quoted in Waller, 1705). As factuality captivated the Enlightenment mind, the moral world was surrendered to speculation professed by divines, many of whom accepted the Enlightenment belief that their pursuit was ephemeral.

As the social sciences and the liberal state emerged and overlapped historically, Enlightenment thinkers in eighteenth-century Europe advocated the techniques of experimental reasoning to support the state and citizenry. Objects and events situated in space–time were considered to contain all the facts there are. Value-free experimentalism in Enlightenment terms has defined the theory and practice of mainstream social science until today. This chapter argues that only a reintegration of research practice with the moral order provides an adequate alternative.

Max Weber's commitment to value neutrality reflects the Enlightenment's subject–object dichotomy. In the process of maintaining the distinction between value freedom and value relevance, he separates facts from values and means from ends. He appeals to empirical evidence and to logical reasoning, rooted as this is in human rationality. For Weber, as for John Stuart Mill before him, empirical science deals with questions of means, and his warning against inculcating political and moral values presupposes a means–ends dichotomy (see Weber, 1949a, pp. 18–19; 1949b, p. 52). Weber "takes it for granted that there can be a language of science – a collection of truths – that excludes all value-judgments, rules, or directions for conduct" (Root, 1993, p. 205). Scientific knowledge exists for its own sake, being morally neutral. Neutrality is desirable "because questions of value are not rationally resolvable" and neutrality in the social sciences is assumed to contribute "to political and personal autonomy" (Root, 1993, p. 229).

Empiricism in communications

In empiricism, knowledge is built up and communicated brick by brick. In communications we call this the stimulus–response model, in which we go after the in-between, calibrating it empirically, insisting on a feedback loop, and quantifying

the noise in the channel. The model presupposes the Enlightenment's fact–value dichotomy. The statistically sophisticated message systems are put into mathematical form in order to advance scientific prediction and control. In this perspective, ethical questions are left along the fringes, for those with divine wisdom or for hot-tempered moralists and quasi-academics.

Out of inertia or lethargy, the majority of communication scholars have assumed a priestly role as guardians of the empiricist view; they are busy doing "normal science" – to put it in Thomas Kuhn's (1996) words. Most research money supports studies that measure observable behavior, finding in such results the precision that their authors desire. Theory and methodology scholars seek more elaborate and finely tuned procedures, more complex multivariate scales, faster computer banks, and longer-range experiments. Empirical science spawned different research styles, some causal and others functional, many sociological in scope and several psychological; and representatives of these styles debate among themselves the hypodermic needle concept and the two-step flow. However, these variations are only nuances of methodology. Mass communication research since its origin 75 years ago has been fundamentally empirical and committed to a stimulus–response motif as its primary model.

Defects in the mainstream view

Despite good intentions and Herculean effort, communication scholars witness an ever-lengthening agenda of unresolved issues. The received view has produced an elegant handling of details, but the technically rigid left-to-right transportation model is unhelpful for the overarching issues of today – issues such as multiculturalism, visual thinking, digital technologies, and dehumanization.

Robert Fortner provides an instructive example of the way neutrality-driven theory marginalizes ethics. He observes that Christian communication scholars and practitioners have generally followed the dominant positivist model, "seeing communication merely as the exchange or even the one-way transfer of information" (Fortner, 2007, p. 78). Evangelical Christians committed to the Great Commission have tended to adopt unreflectively "an obsolete theoretical perspective (the so-called hypodermic needle model) to justify the enormous sums that they invest in attempting to get the gospel out to the world" (2007, p. xii). But, for Christians to live authentically in the world, they need a distinctive theory that is not co-opted by the fact–value dualism. For them theory building is at the same time a philosophy of communication, and therefore organically and essentially redemptive (2007, p. 18). The goal for Christian communication is for the media to serve "the moral needs of society" (2007, p. 53), but importing empiricist theory tends to connect humans to commodities rather than to each other. Media strategies for outreach, based as they are on the neutrality tradition, center on marketing and packaging; the gospel is reduced to a first-class product and the media become devices for reaching the largest number at the lowest cost.

There are bigger fish to fry than the mainstream model delivers. Cramped into the Enlightenment's fact–value parameters, the mechanistic theory of communication is little more than the crumbs left over by sociology, psychology, economics, and linguistics. Equipped with a method, it produces mountains of information; but there is no evidence that it strengthens the common good. Though the scientific method made stupendous gains in the natural world, generating empirically testable causal explanations, territorialists insist correctly that it has been counterproductive for the quantitative approach to overwhelm the study of society as well.

Interpretive studies

A paradigm shift is occurring in media studies these days, as in the social sciences generally. Many theorists recognize that an outdated model built on the fact–value dichotomy has accomplished its potential. A growing number of them sense deeply that the field of communication needs a fresh theoretical foundation and a more solid set of intellectual questions. A watershed change to interpretiveness is under way. The interpretive turn recovers the fact of human agency – that is, intentions, purposes, and values.

One primary rationale for moving away from conventional scientific inquiry is to put into practice "a vision of research that enables and promotes social justice, community, diversity, civic discourse and caring" (Lincoln, 1995, pp. 277–278). In charting the future of the interpretive project, one prominent theme is seen to continue as it has since the early 1970s: "inquiry as a moral act, ethics, and critical consciousness" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1048). In Thomas Schwandt's (2000) terms, different epistemologies "vie for attention as potential justifications for doing qualitative inquiry": interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. However, although they "embrace different perspectives on the aim and practice of understanding human action," one of the "perdurable issues" for every interpretive scholar "is the ethical space that researchers and researched occupy. … Moral issues arise from the fact that a theory of knowledge is supported by a particular view of human agency" (Schwandt, 2000, pp. 190, 200, 203).

These theorists oppose the standard framework for morality, that is, the formal criteria that adjudicate cases and competing claims; they theorize morality from an experiential, relational basis instead (see Schwandt, 2000, p. 204). They work from narrative, culture, and social experience to retheorize the field away from the Western ethics of abstraction and rationalism. Together they represent a larger movement toward a cultural and comparativist ethics. They aim not for epistemic certainty but for thick description, saturation on each level rather than verification under controlled conditions.

Communities are not merely functional entities; they are knit together by an admixture of social values. Without allegiance to a web of ordering relations, society as a matter of fact is inconceivable. Among the contending values, some

empower our livelihood, others do not. The voices of everyday life are fallible and often irresolute. Our dialogic encounters can promote authenticity, but they can equally entrench the status quo. Press and media theories, therefore, should enable us "to discover moral truths about ourselves"; narratives ought to "bring a moral compass into readers' lives" by accounting for things that matter to them (Denzin, 1997, p. 284). They help us identify those concerns at the heart of our humanness that warrant mutual struggle. Coming to grips with them will strengthen a community's ability to engender moral reasoning and action.

Applying an interpretive approach to press and media theorizing can accomplish for communication studies what Albion Small earlier attempted for sociology. Small (1903), the president of Colby College in Maine, taught a moral philosophy course to every senior, orienting them to civic responsibility before graduation. Called to the University of Chicago to start what we now know as "the Department of Sociology," he saw sociology, in effect, as moral philosophy conscious of its task: "Science is sterile unless it contributes knowledge of what is worth doing" (Small, 1903, p. 119). He wanted to make sociology the organizing center of the social sciences as a whole, and he believed that sociology could accomplish that by including in its work an index and measure of what ought to be done.

Extraordinarily influential, Small founded the American Sociological Association (ASA) and served as the first editor of the *American Sociological Review*. But subsequent history ruptured his vision. In 1932, William Ogburn assumed the presidency of ASA as Small's successor. And in his presidential address Ogburn declared:

> Sociology as a science is no longer interested in making the world a better place to live. In encouraging beliefs. In setting forth impressions of life. In leading the multitudes or guiding the ship of state. Science is interested directly in one thing only, to wit, discovering new knowledge. (Ogburn, quoted in Sloan, 1980, p. 18)

Integrating facts and values has been a monumental challenge in academic life since the eighteenth century. Deep inside we may agree with Thoreau that there is no sense in going to Zanzibar just to count the cats, but objective science is addictive nonetheless (Carey, 1997c). The flagship journal of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, is dominated by mainstream empiricism today as it has been since its founding in 1924. Three fourths of the submissions at present to the premier *Journal of Advertising* are short-term effects studies. For communications, interpretativeness lays a new foundation on which to integrate ethics into theorizing, and three illustrations are prototypes of how this integration works: social responsibility, cultural studies, and sociological propaganda. In each of these media and press theories, ethical issues initiated the theory, guided its development, and are central to its application.

Social Responsibility Theory

The Commission of Freedom of the Press

In 1947 the Commission on Freedom of the Press presented a new theory of the press in its report *A Free and Responsible Press*. It chose the French/English word *responsabilité*/responsibility to describe the theory. Responsibility, in the double meaning of being accountable and being in charge, was the core concept. This meant that decisions and actions were to be praised or blamed. For the Commission, responsibility understood in this sense was a moral concept that designated both the practice of holding persons responsible and an agent's being accountable. The imperative for responsibility became the defining feature of this press theory, in contrast to what John Merill calls "the imperative of freedom."

Named after its chairman, Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago, the Hutchins Commission insisted that the news media have an obligation to society rather than one of promoting the interests of government or of pursuing private prerogatives to publish and make a profit. Believing that the press was too committed to its own individual rights, the report stood both terms – "individual" and "rights" – on their heads with the label "social responsibility." From the nineteenth century until the Commission's era after World War II, the liberal theory of the press promoted objectivity as the dominant ethical ideal. Adherence to fact, impartiality toward politics, and a balanced fairness formed the main content of professional ethics. But deficiencies in objective journalism as the norm had become obvious. While the liberal theory of the press had protected its freedom from government control, it had become accountable primarily to itself. And this ownership home was now big business, turning the press and its products into commodities for profit. The new technologies, as they were mushrooming after World War II, were being driven by invention, engineering, and markets, and liberal theory was co-opted by them. Finally, the new press theory launched by the Commission on Freedom of the Press – the theory that has the ethics of responsibility at its core – reconceptualized the news enterprise around the two fundamental dimensions of responsibility: "carrying out a charge" and "having to account" for the way the charge is carried out. Socially responsible news was defined by its obligations to the community. Instead of being centered on the individual right to publish and regarding it as supreme, the press had a new rationale, centered on a healthy society.

As ethics transformed press theory all the way, from rights to accountability, the understanding of news was revolutionized. *A Free and Responsible Press* went beyond the factuality of objective journalism, to argue that the press should provide "a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning" (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, p. 21). Put in different terms, the news media ought to provide "full access to the day's intelligence" (p. 28). *A Free and Responsible Press* called for news reporting that

makes available "the opinions and attitudes of the groups in society to one another" (p. 21). The report recommended that the media serve "as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism" (p. 23). Recognizing the complicated character of democratic life, the Commission argued that the major mission of mass communications is to raise social conflict "from the plane of violence to the plane of discussion" (p. 23). As part of fulfilling its duties to the community, socially responsible news ought to give a representative picture of the constituent groups in society.

Social responsibility theory beyond 1947

A similar emphasis on the press serving society has emerged elsewhere since World War II without any reference to Hutchins. In 1980 the MacBride report *Many Voices, One World* put social responsibility in explicitly international terms. The United Nations delegate from Ireland, Sean MacBride, spearheaded for UNESCO this review of international media policies and practices, cultural diversity, human rights, and professional journalism. It described a world of information and economic order concentrated in media industries that downplayed local cultures and silenced diverse voices in developing countries. MacBride recommended quality journalism education around the world, so that countries could report effectively on themselves.

Against the backdrop of the MacBride report, the International Order of Journalists and its counterparts – a total of 400,000 working journalists, the largest segment of the organized profession in the world – produced a document entitled "International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism" at meetings in Prague and Paris from 1983 to 1988. While calling for the autonomy of journalists, the document asserted that journalism should operate in the public interest without undue government or commercial influence.

Since the 1990s, community journalism has been reorienting the press toward greater citizen involvement and a healthier public life. Sam Chege Mwangi has researched this movement internationally (Mwangi, 2001). In Kerala, India, indigenous knowledge in agriculture, health, and housing is shared in local languages. In New Zealand, during general election campaigns, journalists from *The Evening Standard* and *Waikato Times* live among the citizens and give voice to the public.

In Latin America more public journalism projects have been carried out than on any other continent, especially through community radio. *El Nuevo Dia* and *La Razon* have identified corruption as the main threat to democracy in Bolivia and are highlighting the citizens' responsibility to come to grips with it. In Costa Rica, Radio Reloj, the leading news radio station, and San Jose's Channel 6 television station are engaged in community forums. Journalists in Kingston, Jamaica, involve citizens in serious efforts to take on health problems such as HIV and prostate cancer (Mwangi, 2001). Since the mid-1980s, many Guatemalan newspapers have enriched the peace process by having their pages dominated by local public opinion. In the language of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), the aim is to empower people through a critical consciousness sparked by a renaming of the world.

Such socially responsible journalism differs from the mainstream model in that it sees its readers and viewers as a public rather than as individual consumers. This new kind of journalism goes "beyond the limited mission of telling the news to a broader mission of helping public life to go well" (Merritt, 1995, pp. 113–114).

Responsibility as an ethical concept

The concept of responsibility that gives this press theory its center, boundaries, and scope is not legal or political in essence, but ethical. Philosophy and theology have established its meaning in moral terms, and that interpretation is, by and large, woven into all the theorizing that went on from 1947 until today.[1] As the new press theory was being developed by the Hutchins Commission, pragmatism was America's dominant philosophy. For pragmatism, good conduct is distinguished from bad through community formation, not in the inner sanctum of individuals. Rather than appeal to pure reason or divine revelation, one evaluates responsible actions as legitimate within their social context. Judgments about being responsible are those that enable effective action. The basic impulse is the moral aim of enriching society and expanding democracy.

The American religious landscape in the mid-twentieth century was dominated by what Will Herberg (1955) famously summarized as the Catholic–Protestant–Jewish trilogy. And in that triad the moral obligation to "love your neighbor" is central. The legacy of a love commandment makes responsible action and the language of accountability possible. The prominent theologian H. Richard Niebuhr turned the Judeo-Christian love of the neighbor into a definition of the person as *The Responsible Self* (Niebhur, 1963). The responsible self is a root metaphor, that is, an expression that opens up our way of being in the world (1963, p. 2). Working with the same meaning the Hutchins Commission gave to "responsible," Niebuhr argued that ethical persons do not live according to formal laws that must be obeyed; they live in responsive relations, as humans and as dialogical selves. The love commandment is a moral demand, not a legal one. Karol Wojtyla, better known as Pope John Paul II, also understood religion as a resource for responsible thinking and action. Writing as a trained philosopher and not with the aim of issuing doctrines for the church, he calls for *Love and Responsibility* (Wojtyla, 1981) in ordinary life. When we grow in our ability to act responsibly, we are loving well. When I act responsibly to another person, I show that I am in general capable of desiring the good (1981, p. 138).

The philosophical and religious context of *A Free and Responsible Press* ensured the moral character of its main idea. In similar fashion, ethics is responsibility's definitional domain in social responsibility theory. Being responsible in India generally means to do one's *dharma* (duty) of social harmony, of propriety to others. The expanding and deepening work in feminist ethics worldwide has strengthened social responsibility theoretically. The axis of feminist ethics around human relations resonates with social responsibility, in contrast to an ethics of liberal press theory where individual selves adhere to formal principles (Noddings, 1984).

The German philosopher Hans Jonas, in his celebrated book *The Imperative of Responsibility* (Jonas, 1984), outlines a substantive concept of responsible social action. He calls it a new ethics, one that demands long-range thinking and has a complexity equal to the power of modern technology.

The work of the multinational alliance for a responsible, plural, and united world, as manifested in the production of a Charter of Human Responsibilities, is testimony, in the public arena, to the viability of social responsibility guidelines for the media. As the Charter explains, "[r]esponsibility is proposed as an ethical concept which builds on Rights and Peace as well as the emergence of a relational worldview that ensures the viability of planet earth and its peoples" (Sizoo, 2010, p. 233). For this prestigious international document, "responsibility is more than an ethical principle to be used at the personal level; rather, it is a commitment citizens make as part of their social identity" (2010, p. 236).

The press' mission

With the ethics of responsibility not only initiating the theory, but guiding its development, the mission of the press is transformed. As noted earlier, already in the Hutchins Commission responsible transmission became a wide-ranging agenda of five features. As social responsibility theory has developed over history and across geography, overcoming the fact–value dichotomy and making ethics central has given this press theory a rich and distinctive understanding of the press' mission.

First, truth telling is the generally accepted norm of the media professions, and credible language is pivotal to the very existence of journalism. Social responsibility ethics requires not just technical adjustments and better effort in news writing, but a new concept of truth. The prevailing view of truth as accurate information is considered too narrow for today's social and political complexities, and a moral philosophy of responsibility is critical for transforming the idea of truth intellectually. Social responsibility yields a sophisticated concept of truth, what might be called interpretive sufficiency. Rather than reducing social issues to the financial and administrative problems politicians define, social responsibility requires that the news media disclose the depth and nuance that enable readers and viewers to identify fundamental issues themselves. For digital technologies to meet the standard of interpretive sufficiency, they are asked to improve the quality of education, broaden the political horizons, and make public policy alternatives understandable.

The second feature of social responsibility ethics is cultural diversity. Since ethnic self-consciousness is a source of social vitality, the media as a social institution are challenged to develop cultural pluralism. To respond to the challenge, social responsibility ethics emulates the common good rather than nurturing individual identity. The public sphere is seen as a mosaic of distinguishable communities, a plurality of ethnic worldviews that intersect to create a social bond but are seriously upheld and remain competitive. Beyond considering everyone free and equal, social responsibility ethics requires a commitment to cultural pluralism, encouraging with other public institutions the flourishing of particular cultures, ethnicities, and religions.

Third, based as it is on interpretive criteria rather than the fact–value dualism, social responsibility means activist journalism, presenting and clarifying society's goals and values. The deliberation facilitated by the press frames the democratic process as an interactive dialogue in which citizens engage one another, on both practical matters and social vision. In this responsibility approach, the public is more likely "to take a broader view of the issues" when moral reasons are exchanged rather than using "political power as the only currency" (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 11). Social conflicts are inevitable in democratic life, and, following the social responsibility standard, they remain the province of citizens rather than of judicial or legislative experts, or of professional journalists. When agreement is not forthcoming, channels of continued interaction are kept open by acknowledging "the moral standing of reasonable views" opposed to one's own (Macedo, 1999, p. 123).

Cultural Studies

Since the 1960s and 1970s, a genre of scholarship under the name of "cultural studies" has developed, which deals with the ideological character of knowledge production. Rooted in the work of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, British cultural studies gained worldwide popularity through Stuart Hall's emphasis on culture and power.

Pragmatism and Chicago School sociology have anchored to communication various American cultural approaches. James Carey revived John Dewey's fundamental insight that communication creates and sustains public life. When Carey bemoaned the paucity of public language and of a public vision, he traded on Dewey's concern for developing a viable public philosophy. Carey argued for placing public justice at the center of our culture's institutional and organizational agendas.

Williams, Hoggart, and Carey took up culture as an epistemological contestation with the authority and dominance of science and positivism. In its most embracing terms, the project of cultural studies has been to contest intellectual reductionism, whether in behaviorism and functionalism or in recent forms such as cognitive theory, aesthetic formalism, and religious fundamentalism. The problem is the tendency of the social sciences to universalize their own logics and to reduce complex realities to a single dimension.

The cultural studies tradition has a long history in Latin America (Fox, 1988; Martin-Barbero, 1987; O'Connor, 1991), where the media are understood as networks of meaning by which people produce cultural forms. Ivan Illich (1973), for example, argues that culture is best interpreted as an ongoing struggle to control our common life by monopolizing its language. Illich demonstrates that the types of political and economic control since the invention of print all rest on the domination of language. Thus doctors come to define for us what health is, lawyers justice, priests religion, engineers technology, educators intelligence, urban

planners cities, and journalists news. As a result of this insistence on the symbols of expertise, people are robbed of meaningful participation in these institutions and in the cultural issues surrounding them. For this Latin Americanist and his colleagues, the urgent need to reconstruct our vernacular discourse is the *sine qua non* of social change.

In addition to Europe, the United States, and Latin America, cultural studies is beginning to flourish also in India, Korea, and Australia.

The attempt to develop a tradition of cultural studies has taken many forms, and this discipline is known by varying labels in different countries: *les sciences humaines*, *Geisteswissenschaften*, humanistic sociology, ethnomethodology, *la cultura popular*, interpretive social science, cultural hermeneutics, cultural science, and naturalistic inquiry. These names point to important differences in philosophical orientation, national tradition, research priorities, and ideological stances. But there are basic agreements and an underlying logic within cultural studies, all centered on the common assumption that the reality we experience is an ongoing social construction.

Ethics as a condition *sine qua non*

Cultural narratives mediate our common understanding of good and evil, tragic and redemptive. Stories stitch together, in George Gerbner's words, "the seamless web of culture that shapes who we are, how we live, whom we love or hate or kill … how long we shall survive" (Gerbner, 1988, p. 6). Everyone has general views on the meaning of life and death, of happiness and reward, and cultures articulate them. Communities are constituted by a set of values that specify their members' role and aspirations. "A community is at bottom," Walter Fisher notes, "an ethical construction" (Fisher, 1991, p. 22).[2] As Newton points out, "finding oneself 'addressed' by ethical demands, in effect, establishes one's place in regard to others as well as to one's own life" (Newton, 1995, p. 229).

Because cultures, as the human habitat, are oriented in particular ways that are considered meaningful, cultural activity is value-centered; to consider values secondary reflects the fact–value dichotomy. For Rickman, "it is a matter of empirical facts and not of metaphysical speculation that we touch life in terms of patterns, connections and relationships which constitute for us the meaning of our experiences and indeed of our lives" (Rickman, 1961, p. 30). Without morally pervasive commitments, a society could not demonstrate such categories of meaning as insult, delicateness, pride, vulgarity, and offense. Humans create science, art, religion, cities, laws, and institutions. Cultural studies examines their contexts to understand what people intend, the reasons they have for their actions, and what their faith in them entails.

Since cultural studies is value-centered and cultural formation is a moral activity, the self-designation and practice of this field are driven by ethics. As Lawrence Grossberg understands the history of cultural studies, James Carey articulated its core idea most explicitly: "The way ethics and culture intersect is clear in Carey's project" (Grossberg, (2010,) p. 84). For Carey, culture has been an ethical entity

(and concept) from its beginning; Dewey, for instance, saw "communication as a principle of ethics, not merely a form of action" (Carey, 1997a, p. 315). Culture produces meanings "by embodying and acting out the claims symbols have on us"; culture "creates forms of social relations into which people enter as opposed to the processes occurring within these forms" (1997a, p. 314). Carey rejected the transmission view of communication because it shelters scientistic and positivistic definitions of knowledge (Grossberg, 2010, p. 79). "The task of cultural studies," he argued, "was simultaneously intellectual and political: to contest a body of theoretical and empirical work carried forward in the name of positive science" (Carey, 1997b, p. 3). He responded to the dominance of science by elevating "the ethical over the epistemological" (Grossberg, 2010, p. 83), and his response can be described this way:

> Carey demanded a nonpositivist understanding of science, which he found in authors such as Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, and Nelson Goodman, who saw science in part as a symbolic system. But that epistemological response was insufficient, for positivism reduced the ethical parameters of human life itself. Carey was frightened by the "culture" – the forms of social life and interaction – embedded in such discourses. (Grossberg, 2010, p. 83)

Carey's "commitment to culture is a commitment to a concept and a vocabulary that can ground an ethical, democratic, and civic vision" of human existence (Grossberg, 2010, p. 84).

Payoff of ethical core

In rejecting scientific approaches to communication for their sterility, cultural studies scholars are driven by moral concerns about what they consider to be their richer, historically profound, and deeper agenda. In its various formations, cultural studies shares a common aspiration: "[t]o confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere within the society … thus becom[ing] a transformative endeavor unembarrassed by the label 'political'" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 140). A basic question in cultural studies research is whether it enables the transformation of the multiple spheres of community life – religion, politics, commerce, ethnicity, gender, and education. Stuart Hall puts it this way: "Popular culture is one of the sites where socialism might be constituted. That is why popular culture matters. Otherwise, to tell you the truth, I don't give a damn about it" (quoted in Grossberg, 2010, p. 82). The mission of cultural studies is not fulsome data per se, but community transformation.[3] In Brian Fay's terms, though in a different context, cultural studies with a critical edge provides "a much-needed impetus for the social and political changes which will have to take place if human life is to continue" (Fay, 1987, p. ix).

In cultural terms, power is not catalogued for its own sake, but translated into strategies for change. Research on labor conditions in the workplace, for example, cannot simply produce "a catalog of incidents of worker exploitation" but must

challenge "the assumptions upon which the cult of the expert and scientific management are based" and indicate avenues of "worker empowerment" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 150). For Arnold Pacey (1992), cultural research strengthens independent bodies operating in the public interest. Mercedes Creel (1995), for instance, calls for support of alternative media production – such as those of the Movimento feminista Manuela Ramos in Peru. The best essays argue for public policy and set agendas for citizen groups.

Guba and Lincoln argue, correctly, that the issues in social science ultimately must be engaged at the worldview level. "Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). At work in cultural studies is a vision of life, and appropriating that vision reflexively is more crucial than implementing operational details. When it is true to itself, cultural studies promotes redemptive popular culture that expresses the moral order. Therefore Lawrence Grossberg, editor of *Cultural Studies* and a leading cultural studies theorist, centers its legacy and future vitality on its ethical dimension:

> The challenge is … to invent new possibilities for thinking culture otherwise. We may need to rethink social conditions in a way that grounds an ethical vision of democratic and civil life. Carey clearly identified the challenge facing cultural studies today: where do we locate the foundations of our ethical and political struggle? This challenge is, for me, why culture still matters. (Grossberg, 2010, p. 86)

Sociological Propaganda

As the United States became a global power after World War II, theories of international communication began to develop in the academy. The idea of free information flow initiated the theorizing in the 1950s, where freedom of expression was typically equated with freedom of the markets (McQuail & Windahl, 1993, pp. 217–222). Given the bipolarity of the world in politics at the time of its origin, free flow theory considered state regulation to be antithetical to the development of democracy in its contest with socialist nations, where information was controlled. Free flow theory divided the world into dominant central and dependent peripheral lands, assuming a predominantly one-way news flow from the former towards the latter and equitable flows among the dominant lands.

Modernization theory

In the 1960s a sophisticated theory of international communication arose out of this free flow ideology. Linking itself to the project of modernity, modernization theory established itself within the geopolitical trend toward development. How can the media spread modernity was the central question – developed to undeveloped, First to Third World, North to South, West to East. Communication and

national development became the overall framework, and modernization theory the pre-eminent model. The theory assumed that success was measured in gross national product (GNP), unlimited growth being possible for traditional societies that followed the industrial patterns of North America and Europe.

The triumvirate of Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and second-generation Everett Rogers were the major theorists.[4] Their modernization theory restated the empiricism of communication's dominant model and took its fact–value dichotomy for granted. This dualism in turn allowed the three theorists the myth that media technologies are neutral. Their work did represent a crucial juncture in the history of press and media theory. For the first time, media systems were considered an independent variable. Rather than seeing communications phenomena as derivative of the social sciences, media institutions and technology were now independent entities, to be understood in their own terms (see McPhail, 2009).

Daniel Lerner, in his *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Lerner, 1958), studied Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey. He presented a theory of social transformation for poor countries where this transformation depended on the modernism of the West: its technology, political structures, systems of mass communication, and values. In Lerner's model, urbanization led to the growth of the mass media (as people demanded news and information), which in turn resulted in greater public participation in economic activity and politics. On the basis of a study of the effectiveness of propaganda in the Middle East, Lerner claimed that exposure to American media messages could motivate "traditional" people in the postcolonial nations to become "modern" by cultivating empathy with Americans about their ideas and ways of life and acceptance of American goods (see Fortner, 2011, p. 934).

Wilbur Schramm's 1964 book *Mass Media and National Development* (Schramm, 1964) drew both on Lerner and on W. W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth: An Anti-Communist Manifesto* (Rostow, 1960), and in the process it legitimized mass media as a field.[5] Published with UNESCO support, it opened up a huge amount of research into the link between the spread of communication technology and socioeconomic development. It argued for free-flowing information systems as the only effective tool for social change, and it documented the ways in which the mass media can stimulate social and economic development in emerging nations. Schramm emphasized the human element rather than presenting a strictly econometric model of development, but he endorsed and elaborated upon modernization theory's commitment to the media's authoritative role in raising aspirations and in promoting social change.

Everett Rogers published *Diffusion of Innovations* in 1962 (Rogers, 2003). He divided the adopters of new technologies into five categories and organized them with the help of the mathematics of the Bell curve. In the diffusion process, the rate of adoption was said to follow the mean of a normal S curve from innovators and early adopters to laggards who adopt late or not at all. Rogers' approach to modernization and his categories for organizing the research data

provided a common framework for development communication studies. As Fortner (2011, p. 938) observes:

> the advantage of Rogers' approach over earlier explanations of modernization was that it did not depend on any national commitment – as would be required to build a dam… – and thus provided a means to understand the individual decisions that might be made in regard to investing in, or adopting, a single-user innovation.

While the limitations of the dominant paradigm had been exposed, the diffusion of innovation strategy offered practical solutions – for example, for agriculture and for health and nutrition – that required scientific information for personal choice and practice.

The triumvirate's modernization model accepted modernity as a given. Its individual members' understanding of the structures and practices of media systems was determined by the basic philosophical assumptions of the Enlightenment that initiated the modern era. What they considered to be a universal model assumed a high degree of individualism, involved an intense quest for democracy, and postulated an economy that allowed for little state intervention. Their commitment to the abstractions of scientific methodology made them unaware of the fact that the modernization process generates a cycle of dependency – on technology, expertise, and media content (this would be a later criticism).[6] The model's focus on behavioral effects obscured its commitment to commercialism. As scholars adhered to the monolithic mathematics of their empiricism, particularly after Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovation strategy, the top-down, hierarchical development process was not clearly understood. As Robert White argues, from the beginning, development theory and practice have been "caught in a fundamental contradiction regarding the principle of participation" (White, 1994, p. 95). On the one hand, participation through abundant media technologies was emphasized. But, all the while, scientifically based social engineering has guided the logic of development practice, reserving for the "professional elite the initiative and control of development processes that deny the possibility of real participation" (1994, p. 101). As is true of the fact–value dichotomy as a whole, ethical issues emerged by default, along the margins or outside the paradigm, and after positivist thinking had established the agenda.

Jacques Ellul's ethics

In theorizing communication and social change, Jacques Ellul's sociological propaganda analysis is an ethics-driven approach that poses a radical alternative to the monologic, empiricist media theory of Lerner, Schramm, and Rogers. Ellul is not trapped in their fact–value dualism, and his philosophy of technology is fundamentally different from the naïve instrumentalism of modernization theory. He agrees that media technologies are a definitive factor of social change, but he replaces modernization's monologic view with a human-centered perspective, which returns social transformation to community life and culture. Ellul's complicated

concept of covert propaganda stands in sharp contrast to Lerner's elementary understanding of propaganda in the Middle East, which he compares unfavorably to the transmission of scientific information in and from modern societies (Fortner, 2011, p. 934).

Through dialectics, ethics is foregrounded in Ellul's theory of media systems. Ellul's two-pole concept distinguishes his work from the modernization paradigm. Dialectics is his method for developing the concept of sociological propaganda.

> The sum of my books constitutes a whole consciously conceived as such. At root – to the extent that I became convinced on the one side that it was impossible to make a unity of the study of modern society, and on the other that it was equally impossible to do a theological study without reference to the world in which one is – it became indispensable for me to find the link, and this could only be the dialectical process. (Ellul, 2010, p. 305)

For Ellul, systematic thought must engage the "yes" and the "no" without excluding either. As problems in history are identified and critiqued, dialectical analysis simultaneously affirms what ought to be done. It examines prevailing social trends on the one hand and basic human values on the other. The normative "yes" is always in dialectical tension with the descriptive "no."

The normative is omnipresent in Ellul's scholarship, as three of his books address ethical questions in depth: *To Will and to Do*, *Violence*, and *The Ethics of Freedom*. He distinguishes ordinary moral judgments from a morality that derives from revelation (Ellul, 1976, p. 361). Every community finds it necessary to formulate some kind of moral code (Ellul, 1969, p. 125). Without an ethical system "there would be constant warfare, and interpersonal relationships would be unthinkable" (Ellul, 1969, p. 80). Morality has to do with the meeting of "humble but essential needs: air fit to breathe, sufficient nourishment, a harmonious order, and the possibility of mutual relationships" (Ellul, 1969, pp. 80–81).

What makes revealed ethics distinct from this common morality is the inseparability of freedom and love. "The whole of revealed ethics consists in this dialectical movement, constantly renewed, from love to freedom and from freedom to love" (Ellul, 1976, p. 206). "There is no love without freedom. On the other hand, there can be no freedom without love. … Freedom in itself excludes love" (Ellul, 1976, p. 112). "Scripture maintains that there is no freedom where there is no love. The two realities are tied together so closely that to destroy the one is necessarily to destroy the other" (Ellul, 1976, p. 200).

Ellul endorses Martin Buber's familiar contrast between I–Thou and I–It relations (1976, p. 208). To accept modernity's definition of freedom as negative liberty, or even, in advanced cases, as positive freedom, in effect pushes love to the margins. The ethics of love becomes the duty of do-gooders outside the political–commercial nexus. If the media are supposed to transmit only factual data, then this fundamental issue in ethics is not central but peripheral.

Instead of inscribing his project within modernity, Ellul's ethics gives him a standpoint outside it. His concerns are foreign to the positivistic grounding of communication research in modernization theory, oriented as it is to functional problem solving. For him each major research question – two-step diffusion, traditional practices versus development, media ownership patterns, and news routines – has an implicit origin and purpose in value questions that transcend the immediate issue. He laments the erosion of democracy, which propaganda makes "as totalitarian, authoritarian, and exclusive as dictatorship" (Ellul, 1965, p. 249). Such positions are common in critical theories. Ellul's uniqueness derives from his ascription of these problems to causes that are not political and ideological so much as personal and theological. For Ellul the "yes" of the dialectical reality can only exist outside the system, transcendent and revealed. Unidimensional media theory, lacking transcendent possibilities and being confined within the technological system, can never account for "the continuation of life, the unfolding of history, the simple existence of man as man" (Ellul, 1981, p. 308). Ellul makes this judgment not in the interest of apologetics, "but simply pointing to the unavoidable result of the twofold flow of my researches, sociological on the one side and theological on the other" (Ellul, 1981, p. 308).

Covert propaganda

Propaganda is Ellul's term for the dominance of technical means and goals over the flow of information through society. He downplays the usual interpretation of propaganda as a biased act of persuasion and redefines it as the omnipresent set of methods that coordinate life in technologically advanced societies and that intensify as societies become more industrialized Ellul, 1965, p. 61).

In *Propaganda*, *Humiliation of the Word*, and *The Technological Bluff* Ellul constructs an analysis of modern communication systems in terms of *la technique*. *La technique* is for him the mystique of machineness behind machines, an omnivorous administrative force in which efficient ordering saturates human laws, values, and knowledge. Modernization's embrace of media technologies as transmission instruments is no intellectual match for his substantive and comprehensive myth of technique.

With his dialectical ethics of freedom and love up front, Ellul concentrates his scholarship on a totalizing model of sociological propaganda that is covert: a model largely overlooked and misunderstood in the conventional wisdom from Harold Lasswell to Daniel Lerner. In the process, Ellul thoroughly redefines the meaning of propaganda. In his radical framework, modern pervasive means of communication are not informational devices through which citizens guide politics; they are not merely stimuli, but also agents of propagandization. They do not exchange neutral messages, but subtly stitch humans into the warp and woof of an efficiency-dominated culture. Ellul worries throughout his 50 books that humans are being gradually molded to fit the technological imperative. We are enveloped in data, absorbed in a monodimensional world of stereotypes and

commonplaces, and integrated into a homogeneous whole by the machinery of conformity. Our own voice and identity are replaced by a technicized worldview, consigning us, in Paulo Freire's formula, to an oppressive culture of silence (Freire, 1970, pp. 134–150).

Ellul is not impressed that the media were called to social responsibility a decade after modernization theory had taken over in international communication studies. For him, the ethical issues in the media cannot be reduced to professional lapses but involve the elimination of moral guideposts – the media as a unit operating only through administrative ethos (a climate totally foreign to moral imperatives).

The media, Ellul (1965) argues, are the means to prevent increasing administrative organization "from being felt as too oppressive and to persuade men to submit with good grace" (p. xviii). The media do not oppose the efficiency motif; instead they subtly become complicit in our accepting its overall design. Thus the critical matter – for Ellul, as it was for Weber – is withstanding a pre-emption, protecting humans from "the parceling out of their soul, from the supreme mastery of the bureaucratic way of life" (Ellul, 1967, p. 18).

International communications and social change

Ellul and the empiricist models see the international communications system in radically different terms. He understands organizational forms and technological structures not as something neutral or benign, but as actively implicated in the social order. His ethics at the intersection of freedom and love questions the ideological assumption implicit in the free flow doctrine – a doctrine that seems on the surface to be value-free and inherently beneficial for the world community. His work helps to clarify the concerns of traditional societies about their cultural integrity. In his theory of media systems questions of meaning, life's purpose, and moral values predominate. Instead of calculating behavioral effects, he prevents us from chasing organizational rainbows and peddling panaceas.

Ellul's media theory protests modernization's technological imperative. He calls for an international communications system driven by moral imperatives. Instead of monologic cultural imperialism under the guise of social change, he offers a dialogic ethics of cultural continuity with transformations from the grassroots. His humanocentric media theory does not reject media technologies per se but restricts their territory. Why cannot modern and traditional societies coexist, he asks, rather than the former demanding change from the latter, which they consider inferior? The issue is not technological development, but societies living in justice, that is, at the juncture of freedom and love.

Ellul offers a more sure-handed direction for social change than one based on the received view. He lays out a theoretical foundation for rethinking media systems along the lines of a rational–spiritual dialectics. Justice, equity, dignity are not qualities that mathematical models are designed to cultivate or reward. So alternatives

outside a marketplace regime need to be constructed and sustained, while international communication systems constrained by the marketplace are challenged and dislodged.

Conclusion

Since the 1980s, scholars and professionals in media ethics have taken theory seriously. And the challenge of theorizing is greater than ever. By and large, theories of media ethics have been constructed when print and then broadcast media dominated. The digital revolution requires new or adjusted theorizing that comes to grips with the technologically revolutionary changes. Media technologies are now a global phenomenon and theories of ethics that are rooted in Western traditions are not international in scope.

The need for creative theorizing within communication ethics is also a real one in media and press theory. And it raises the main question of this chapter. Given the complexities of mediated communication today, is active theorizing within media ethics sufficient? Can the rest of the field ignore the question of ethics? Is a pervasive strategy of ethics not essential for a discipline that is conceptually healthy and professionally reputed for its integrity? And, if press and media theory generally ought to have a moral dimension to give such theory substance and sustainability, is such theorizing even possible?

This chapter has worked through those questions. It argues that the dominant empiricist model of media and press theory does make values secondary and has left ethical theory and practice in a weak position, dealing with quandaries and marginalia. The press theory of social responsibility, and two other media theories (cultural studies and sociological propaganda), demonstrate the validity of making ethics front and center. Their normative core enables them to keep human rather than epistemological issues central. These theories, driven as they are by ethics, have the dynamic quality of responding to needs and struggles of everyday life instead of having a preoccupation with methods. This chapter recommends that we assess media and press theories not only on the grounds of their empirical validity, but also on the strength of their contributions to ethics.

Notes

1 Japan's version of social responsibility is an exception: it defines the concept in primarily legal terms (Tsukamoto, 2006). Given that Japan's press theory developed during the United States occupation, being preoccupied with the press' relationship with the law is understandable. Working out legalities, specifying criminal and illegal practices, emphasizing juridical rights and duties enabled the press to act responsibly as a constitutional government was being negotiated.

2 Fisher elaborates this thesis using terms from Dewey, Buber, Hauerwas, and Gadamer; and he includes an extensive bibliography.

3 Only a detailed content analysis of the cultural studies literature will prove it, beginning with the multiple journals in cultural studies at present: *Critical Studies in Media Communications*; *Journal of Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*; *Culture and Critique*; *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*; *Journal of Communication and Culture*; and *Middle East Journal of Communication and Culture*.
4 For an extensive discussion of these theorists, and W. W. Rostow, in both form and content, see Fortner 2011 (pp. 933–940).
5 Walt Whitman Rostow (1960) was a US economist and national security advisor to Lyndon Johnson. His book defended free-enterprise capitalism for developing nations, and his five-stage model of economic growth was an important concept in the theory of modernization.
6 Cultural imperialism critique has developed this argument most decisively.

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Part II

Audiences, Social Construction, and Social Control

14

Agenda-Setting Influence of the Media in the Public Sphere

Maxwell E. McCombs and Lei Guo

Nearly a century ago, Walter Lippmann (1922) succinctly identified the setting for the news media's role in the formation of public opinion with the phrase "the world outside and the pictures in our heads." This phrase was the title of his opening chapter in *Public Opinion*, where, through historical examples and anecdotes, Lippmann made the argument that the news media are the principal bridge between the broad arena of public affairs and our perceptions of this arena. He elaborated the role of the news media in transmitting a truncated version of that world outside to the public, whose mental pictures are the pseudo-environment that is the basis of public opinion and behavior.

A half-century later, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) empirically tested Lippmann's thesis that the truncated versions of the world outside presented by the news media are a primary source of citizen's perceptions of public affairs. Their seminal Chapel Hill study undertook the precise measurement, during the 1968 US presidential election, of the relationship between the patterns of news coverage for public issues and the voters' perceptions of what were the most important issues of the day. Specifically, McCombs and Shaw examined the degree of correspondence between the news coverage for the top five issues in the 1968 presidential campaign and the level of importance that voters accorded these issues. Their hypothesis was that the salience of these issues on the media's agenda influenced the salience of the same issues on the public's agenda. The agenda-setting role of the news media is the transmission of issue salience from the media's agenda to the public's agenda. Or, in metaphoric terms, McCombs and Shaw hypothesized that the media's agenda set the public's agenda. The term "agenda," as used here, is a neutral descriptive term, unlike in "to have an agenda." The media's agenda is the pattern of news coverage for the major

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issues of the day. In the Chapel Hill study, this agenda was determined by a content analysis encompassing 25 days during the fall campaign covered by nine major news sources used by voters – local and national newspapers, network television news, and news magazines. The public's agenda was determined by a survey that asked voters which issues they considered to be most important in the election. The substantial correlations found in Chapel Hill between the rank order of these five issues in the news coverage and the rank order of these same issues in voters' perceptions of the most important issues launched the agenda-setting tradition in communication research. Subsequently the agenda-setting influence of the news media on the public has been documented in hundreds of studies worldwide, both during election campaigns and in non-election periods, for a vast array of issues and topics (McCombs, 2004).

Here we will examine three distinct aspects of this agenda-setting influence of the news media on the public as well as the psychological principles that explain when this influence is strong and when it is weak. The continuing evolution of the theory of agenda setting has now extended over nearly a half century, from the seminal 1968 Chapel Hill study to the present. Two aspects of the influence of the media on the public sphere date from the earliest years of agenda-setting research. Explication of a third aspect of this influence dates from recent years. And the explication of the psychology of the agenda-setting process goes back to the early years and extends to the present. We now turn to an overview of this continuing evolution of agenda-setting theory, which describes and explains the role of the news media in the formation of public opinion.

Basic Agenda-Setting Effects

The basic agenda-setting role of the news media is to focus public attention on a small number of key issues and topics. Although there are dozens of issues and other aspects of the world outside competing for attention, the news media can cover only that handful deemed most newsworthy. In turn, the accumulated empirical evidence indicates that, to a considerable degree, the public accepts this agenda of the media as its own agenda of the most important issues of the day. As previously noted, this is not a deliberate and premeditated effort by the news media to influence public opinion, but rather an inadvertent result of the media's need to focus on a few key topics in their presentation of the news.

This was documented in the Chapel Hill study, with its tight focus on voters in a single community. Shortly after, Ray Funkhouser's (1973) benchmark study, with its exceedingly broad focus, documented this relationship between the media's agenda and the public's agenda at the national level across the entire decade of the 1960s. In his study the correlation was +0.78 between the pattern of coverage for public issues in the major news magazines and the public's pattern of responses to the Gallup Poll question "What is the most important problem facing this country today?"

Another longitudinal study focused on a single issue, civil rights, and examined the match, over a 23-year period, between the percentage of the public's naming of civil rights in response to the Gallup Poll's "most important problem" (MIP) question and the pattern of coverage for civil rights on the front pages of the *New York Times* (Winter & Eyal, 1981). The correlation between the media's agenda reflected by the news coverage and the public's agenda reflected in responses to the MIP question was +0.71 across a diverse period of time – 1954 to 1976.

Fast forwarding to the present with its vastly expanded media landscape and its patterns of news media use varying widely among different generations, Coleman and McCombs (2007) found little difference in agenda-setting effects among the younger, middle, and older generations in state-wide surveys from North Carolina and Louisiana. Correlations between the prominence of five major issues in the newspapers of each state and the importance of these issues in each of the three age groups ranged from +0.80 to 1.00. Particularly compelling is the comparison, in Louisiana, of the issue agendas of low and high Internet users to the issue agenda of the state's major newspapers. For low Internet users, the correlation with the newspaper agenda is +0.90. For high Internet users, the correlation is +0.70, a lower but still robust correspondence. These finding from two state-wide surveys suggest that these strong agenda-setting effects result from the pervasive diffusion of news by many media rather than from the particular impact of individual media, be they traditional media such as newspapers or the array of new electronic media that are favored by members of the younger generation.

This macro view is further buttressed by an investigation of the 2006 Swedish national election that measured the impact of daily news use across nine major news media – both newspapers and television – on issue salience (Stromback & Kiousis, 2010). To enhance the measurement of perceived issue salience among members of the public, each respondent's reply to the "most important problem" question was followed by this question: "How important is that issue for how you will vote in the parliamentary election?" Stromback and Kiousis (2010, p. 288) found that "attention to *political news* exerts a significant and rather strong influence on perceived issue salience and that attention to *political news* matters more than attention to various specific news shows on television and in radio, or to different newspapers." In other words, agenda-setting effects result from the transmission of issue salience to the public from the collective voice of the news media. This outcome is buttressed by widespread exposure, ranging from incidental exposure to studied attention paid by much of the public to a range of news media over the course of a week (McCombs & Lee, 2013).

These basic agenda-setting effects, sometimes called first-level effects, which are reflected in the substantial match between the media's agenda and the public's agenda in these examples, have been replicated in a broad variety of cultural, political, and media settings worldwide and with a mix of research methodologies that test the causal relationship. These replications range from an early series of election studies in the United States (Shaw & McCombs, 1977; Weaver, Graber,

McCombs, & Eyal, 1981) and public concern across a year or more for a variety of national issues in the USA and Germany (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1992; Eaton, 1989) to local issues in Japan, Spain, and Argentina (Canel, Llamas, & Lennon, 1996; Lennon, 1998; Takeshita, 1993).

Attribute Agenda-Setting Effects

Beyond these basic, first-level agenda-setting effects on the public's focus of attention and its perception of what the most important issues of the day are, there is a second level of agenda-setting effects: attribute agenda setting. If we think of the items on the agenda at the first level as a set of objects (analogous to attitude objects), then it is clear that these objects have certain attributes that are emphasized to varying degrees on the media's and the public's agendas. When news stories report on an object, an issue, a public figure, or whatever, some aspects of the object are emphasized, some are mentioned less frequently, and other aspects not at all. The same is true when individuals think about an object or talk about that object with others. In other words, for each object on the first-level agenda, there is an agenda of attributes that can be rank-ordered in terms of their appearance in the news and in terms of their appearance in people's descriptions of public issues and other objects.

At the second level of agenda setting, the theoretical proposition is that the media's attribute agenda influences the salience of these attributes on the public's agenda. Again, there is considerable empirical evidence in support of this proposition. In the 1996 Spanish general election, the ranking orders of the attributes describing the major candidates presented in seven news media were substantially correlated with the ranking order of the attributes in Navarra voters' descriptions of these same men (McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000). For example, the correlations between the voters' attribute agenda and the attribute agenda of *El Pais*, a national newspaper, was +0.83 for Aznar, who won the election; +0.84 for Gonzalez, the incumbent prime minister; and +0.86 for Anguita, the candidate of a far-left coalition. For all six comparisons with two national newspapers (3 candidates × 2 newspapers), the median correlation was +0.81. For two national TV channels, the median correlation was +0.52. For the six comparisons between the voters and two local newspapers, the median correlation was +0.70.

Evidence of similar attribute agenda-setting effects was found in a longitudinal study of the 2006 Israeli national election, which examined the attribute agenda of the three major candidates in two leading newspapers across three months and among voters in three surveys during the final two months of the election (Balmas & Sheafer, 2010). Nine comparisons of these attribute agendas (3 candidates × 3 time periods) yielded a media correlation of +0.62. The range of the attribute agenda-setting effects was +0.52 to +0.89. Additional analysis of the changes in these agendas over the three time periods found that changes in the media's attribute agenda were paralleled by changes in the public attribute agenda

(+0.81). Finally, a comparison of light and heavy newspaper readers found weak correlations among the light readers for the attribute agendas of all three candidates (a median correlation of +0.26) and strong significant correlations among heavy readers for all three candidates (a median correlation of +0.61).

Similar results have been found for the attributes of issues. A national longitudinal study of a Swiss referendum on changing the country's political asylum law also found strong attribute agenda-setting effects evolving across the summer (Wirth et al., 2010). Interviews with a representative sample of citizens found little impact of the media's agenda in the initial two waves of interviewing, but strong cumulative effects in a third wave, among persons reporting heavy reliance on newspapers and TV for information about politics and the asylum law. The correlation between the wave 1 media's agenda and the wave 3 public's agenda for persons reporting heavy media reliance was +0.79. For the wave 2 media's agenda and the wave 3 public's agenda, it was +0.82. For the wave 3 media's agenda and the wave 3 public's agenda, it was +0.92. All the other correlations were nonsignificant.

At the local level in the United States there was strong correspondence (+0.60) between the attribute agenda of a local newspaper and the pictures in citizens' minds for six facets of an environmental issue – the development of a large man-made lake in Indiana (Cohen, 1975).

These second-level, attribute agenda-setting effects have been replicated in a broad variety of settings and with a mix of methodologies testing the causal relationship. For candidate images, these replications have included presidential elections in the United State and local elections in Spain and Taiwan (Becker & McCombs, 1978; King, 1997; McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997; Weaver et al., 1981). For the attributes of public issues, attribute agenda-setting effects have been found for the issues of the economy in the United States and of the environment and political reform in Japan (Benton & Frazier, 1976; Mikami, Takeshita, Nakada, & Kawabata, 1994; Takeshita & Mikami, 1995).

In sum, there is strong evidence of media's agenda-setting effects at two levels: the public's views about what the most important topics of the day are, and its perceptions of the specific aspects of these topics. Returning to Lippmann's phrase "the pictures in our heads," the media influence what these pictures are about and what details of these pictures are prominent in our minds.

Contemporary research continues to build on this foundation of media influence and is characterized by two trends:

- a centrifugal trend of research, expanding to domains beyond the original focus on public affairs;
- a centripetal trend of research, further explicating agenda-setting theory's core concepts.

Although the expansion to domains as disparate as professional sports, corporate reputations, religion, and cultural organizations is intriguing, our focus here is on

two major aspects of the centripetal trend: a further explication of the nature of the media's influence on "the pictures in our heads"; and, most importantly, further exploration of the psychology of this process, which determines whether these agenda-setting effects are strong, moderate, or weak.

Exploring a Third Level of Effects

The elements of "the pictures in our heads" that have been investigated to date at the first and second level of agenda setting are discrete objects and attributes. That is, they are separate and disconnected elements that have been disaggregated from the whole in which they are embedded. On the media's agenda, these elements are various objects and attributes that have been isolated in the content analysis of news stories. On the public's agenda, these elements usually are the various objects and attributes that have been isolated in the content analysis of individuals' responses to open-ended questions. Are the news media able to transfer the salience of a more integrated image – the salience of the larger, more comprehensive *picture*?

Recent research on the network agenda-setting model is the opening gambit on the exploration of a third level of effects, where it is theorized that the salience of the networked relationships among objects and attributes is transferred from the news media to the public. Theoretically central to the network agenda-setting model is an associative network model of memory. Scholars in various disciplines – cognitive psychology, philosophy, geography, and communication – have theorized this associative memory model in similar ways, yet under different descriptions. Examples of such descriptions are "the associative network model" (Anderson, 1983; Anderson & Bower, 1973), "cognitive mapping" (Kaplan, 1973), "the cognitive network model" (Santanen, Briggs, & de Vreede, 2000), "the connectionist model" (Monroe & Read, 2008), and "the spreading activation model" (Collins & Loftus, 1975).

Rather than conceptualizing our mental representations as a hierarchical or linear structure – as implied in the traditional understanding of agenda-setting theory – this associative network model holds that the representation operates pictorially, diagrammatically, or cartographically (Armstrong, 1973; Barsalou, 1998; Braddon-Mitchell & Jackson, 2007; Cummins, 1996). In this network model, individuals' cognitive representation is presented as a network-like structure where any particular construct or node will in general be connected to numerous other constructs or nodes. Here a construct or node in the network can refer to any unit of information: objects and their attributes; goals, values, and motivation; affective or emotional state; and even macro units like schema or frame (Lindsay & Norman, 1977; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Rumelhart & Norman, 1978).

Take political communication as an example. When an individual considers a political candidate and uses some attributes to describe that candidate, it is not necessary for the individual to articulate a hierarchy of attributes ranked by

their importance. Instead an assortment of attributes as well as other related constructs can constitute a network-shaped picture describing that candidate in the individual's mind.

News media are a crucial factor impacting some of our cognitive networks, especially in relation to public affairs. In a restatement of the basic proposition of agenda-setting theory, McCombs (2004) suggested that news media have the capability to influence the audience's network-like mental structure. And he paraphrased Lippmann's (1922) thesis: "the news media, our windows to the vast world beyond direct experience, determine our *cognitive maps* of that world" (McCombs, 2004, p. 3).

Along this line, one less studied concept in agenda-setting theory – a "compelling argument" – also implicitly suggests that news media have the potential to affect the audience's cognitive map by transferring the *relationships*, or the *connections*, among various agenda elements to the public's mind. Specifically, the "compelling argument" hypothesis suggests that the news media emphasis on a certain attribute of an object, namely an attribute that has a particular resonance with the public, provides people with cues to modify their perceived salience of the object that possesses that attribute (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Yioutas & Segvic, 2003). According to this hypothesis, news media not only may shape the perceived importance of attributes and objects separately, but can actually bundle an object with an attribute and make them salient in the public's mind simultaneously. In consequence, the audience may not only treat a certain attribute as a part of the object but also regard the two as connected – as elements integrated in audience members' mental "pictures." For the issue of crime in Texas, Ghanem (1996, 1997) found that a low psychological distance between a crime event in the news and an individual was a compelling argument for the salience of the issue. Although there is also additional empirical support for the "compelling argument" hypothesis (Schoenbach & Semetko, 1992; Williams, Shapiro, & Cutbirth, 1983), the "compelling argument" effect remains greatly understudied (Kiousis, 2005).

Expanding beyond the "compelling argument" and its specific linking of an attribute and an object, the network agenda-setting model asserts that the media can bundle a variety of elements and make them salient in the public's mind simultaneously. These bundles could be sets of objects, sets of attributes, or some combination of objects and attributes. To explore these possibilities, Guo and McCombs (2011a) initially examined sets of attributes, specifically the attributes of political candidates, and re-analyzed data from a previous study, which had found strong attribute agenda-setting effects on the basis of an analysis grounded in the traditional discrete sets of attributes. Using network analysis for the new round of analysis, the strategy of Guo and McCombs for this opening gambit in the exploration of a third level of agenda setting was to compare traditional attribute agenda-setting effects with networked attribute agenda-setting effects. How does the strength of the association between networked media's and public's agendas compare to the strength of traditional measures of attribute agenda setting?

Specifically, two interrelated hypotheses were tested with the help of a network analysis of data originally collected for Kim and McCombs' (2007) study of the 2002 gubernatorial and US senatorial elections in Texas.

- The salience of the relationship network of political candidate attributes on the media's agenda will be positively associated with the public salience of this attribute network.
- The centrality of political candidate attributes in the media attribute network will be positively associated with the centrality of the attributes on the public network agenda.

Two sets of content analysis data from the *Austin American-Statesman* were available from 2002 for reanalysis: (1) news coverage of Republican gubernatorial candidate Rick Perry and of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Tony Sanchez, as each competed in his party's primary gubernatorial election in the spring (2002 Spring Dataset); and (2) news coverage of the same two candidates as well as of two US senatorial candidates, Republican John Cornyn and Democrat Ron Kirk, in the general elections in November (2002 Fall Dataset). The unit of measurement in the content analysis was an assertion in an article that a candidate possessed a particular attribute that described his qualifications or character. Only attributes concerning candidate qualifications and character were considered, because they were by far the most prominent attributes highlighted both by the Austin media and by voters. In other words, what this new study analyzed are specific sub-networks of attributes portraying the political candidates. Nine attributes were found to define personal qualifications and character in the analyzed news stories: (1) leadership; (2) experience; (3) competence; (4) credibility; (5) morality; (6) caring about people; (7) communication skills; (8) pride in family/backgrounds, roots, and race/ethnicity; (9) non-political.

During the 2002 election period, a telephone survey was also conducted among randomly selected Austin residents. To measure the public's attribute agenda, respondents were asked: "Suppose that one of your friends has been away a long time and knows nothing about the political candidates. What would you tell your friend about (Cornyn, Kirk, Perry, and Sanchez)"? Responses were recorded verbatim and later coded using the same nine attributes' categories.

From the network analysis of these two data sets, graphs were created to visualize these media and the public network agendas. Figure 14.1a and 14.1b presents graphs that represent the media and the public attribute agenda networks based on the 2002 Combined Dataset. Visually, these two networks are highly similar. For example, three attributes – "experience," "competence" and "credibility" – are central in both the media and the public networks and demonstrate the strongest mutual connections, as shown in both graphs.

Table 14.1 details the correlations measuring the degree of correspondence between the media network agendas and the public network agendas. Specifically, quadratic assignment procedure (QAP) correlation and regression coefficients

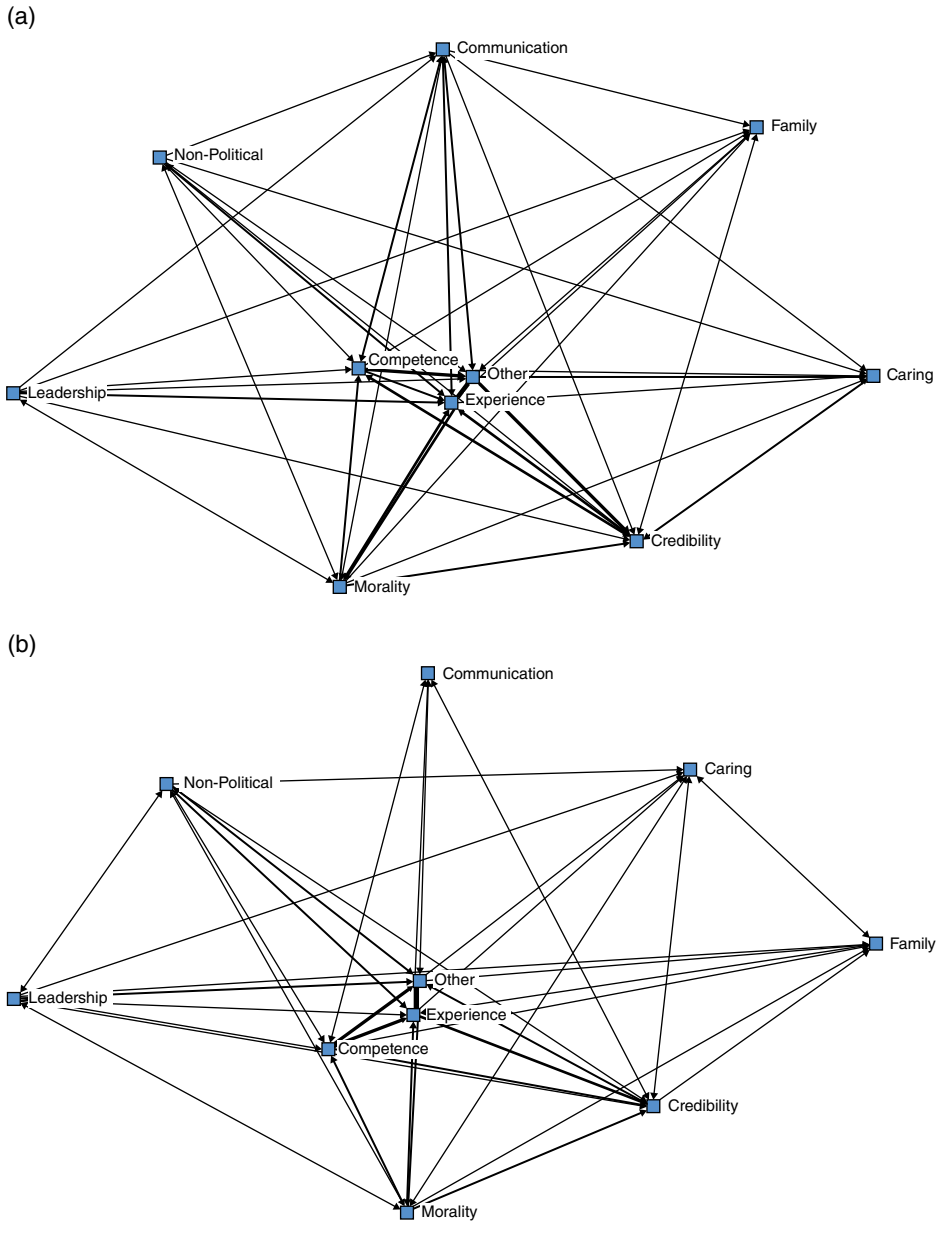

Figure 14.1 The media and public attribute agendas.

for all three 2002 comparisons are positive and statistically significant. The QAP correlations (Pearson's r) between the agendas range from +0.67 to +0.84. All three support the proposition that the salience of the candidate attribute relationships in the media is positively associated with the public salience of those same attribute relationships.

Table 14.1 QAP correlation/regression and centrality correlation/regression between the media's and the public's attribute agenda networks.

Dataset	*QAP Correlation (Pearson's r)*	*QAP Regression (R^2)*	*Centrality Correlation (Pearson's r)*	*Centrality Regression (R^2)*
2002 Spring Dataset	0.75**[1]	0.56**	0.84*[2]	0.70*
2002 Fall Dataset	0.67*	0.45*	0.76*	0.57*
2002 Combined Dataset	0.84**	0.71**	0.91**	0.84**
2010 Fall Dataset	0.71**	0.51**	0.81**	0.66**[3]

[1]** means $p < 0.01$.

[2]* means $p < 0.5$.

[3]The results obtained by Kim and McCombs (2007) are highly similar for all candidates combined, separate analyses for each of the four candidates, and separate analyses for positive and negative attribute agendas.

Table 14.1 also details the "degree centrality" of the nine candidate attributes on the media's and the public attribute agenda networks. Specifically, "degree centrality" refers to the number of ties that a node has, which is the most direct and simplest centrality measurement (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Pearson's r correlation and linear regression tests were conducted to test the relationship between the media's agenda and the public one in terms of the degree centrality. The degree centrality in the media's attribute agenda is significantly correlated with the degree centrality in the public's agenda in all three 2002 datasets, correlations ranging from +0.76 to +0.91. This evidence supports the proposition that the centrality of political candidate attributes in the media attribute network strongly corresponds to the centrality of these same attributes on the public's agenda.

Moreover, the evidence presented here indicates that the correlations and regression coefficients are highest in the combined datasets. This might imply that a network agenda-setting effect depends on cumulative media coverage rather than on coverage over a short time span, as frequently found in traditional agenda-setting research. In other words, it may take a longer period of time to establish the connections between attributes than to build the salience of a sole attribute.

In line with the strategy of this re-analysis – a comparison of traditional measures and networked measures of attribute agenda setting – it is noteworthy that the results for the network agenda-setting effects from the 2002 election period are consistent with the attribute agenda-setting effects found in Kim and McCombs' (2007) study, which is based on the same data. Specifically, the overall rank order correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho = +0.65) between the media's and the public attribute agendas reported by Kim and McCombs corresponds with the QAP correlation (Pearson's r = +0.67) between the media and public network agendas.

These results from the re-analysis of the 2002 Texas election data were replicated with new data, collected during the 2010 Texas gubernatorial election using a more refined methodology (Guo & McCombs, 2011b). To retrieve the public's

cognitive maps about political candidates, a traditional public survey is helpful but not sufficient. Survey questions such as "What would you tell your friends about… (candidates)?" do not provide direct explicit clues about the interrelationships between the attributes in each respondent's mind. Therefore a new data collection method, incorporating a mind-mapping approach, was created for the 2010 election study. Specifically, mind mapping refers to a radiant thinking approach – associative thought processes that proceed from or connect to a central point – which has already been broadly used in the advertising industry for brainstorming (Buzan & Buzan, 1996). Focusing on a certain topic, individuals are usually asked to write down the things that first come up in their minds. Borrowing this mind-mapping concept, a survey sheet was designed with five boxes forming a circle. Respondents were asked first to list up to five attributes describing each political candidate's qualifications and character in the boxes and then to draw a line between all the pairs of attributes they thought were connected. This pilot study of the new methodology collected data from 63 undergraduate students to measure the public's agenda. The media's agenda was based on a content analysis of the local daily newspaper that followed procedures similar to those used in the 2002 study.

The analysis of these data, which are also presented in Table 14.1, shows a very similar pattern to that of the findings from the 2002 gubernatorial and the US senatorial elections. Both the correlation between the media's agenda and the public's agenda (+0.71) and the centrality of attributes on the two agendas (+ 0.81) fall within the range of the earlier analysis.

In sum, these initial tests of the network agenda-setting model suggest that the news media have the capability to construct a more integrated picture of the outside world in people's heads, getting a step closer to Walter Lippmann's (1922) picture metaphor. Moreover, drawing upon the associative network model of memory and the information-processing mechanism described by Lang (2000), the model sheds light on the cognitive processes underlying the agenda-setting effect. Specifically, the three media-reception steps in Lang's theory – encoding, storage, and retrieval – well explain the ways in which news media construct and reconstruct the audience's associative networks by creating new connections or by altering the strength of the connections existing among various objects and attributes. Hence the network agenda-setting model provides an innovative and comprehensive theoretical framework to conceptualize the third level of agenda-setting effect.

Most importantly, the network agenda-setting model is empirically grounded. Datasets based on two election periods across eight years – the 2002 Texas gubernatorial and US senatorial elections and the 2010 Texas gubernatorial election – consistently demonstrate a significant degree of correspondence between the media's network agendas and the public network agendas regarding political candidate qualifications and character.

Moreover, the 2010 study presents a new survey approach for data collection, a mind-mapping survey, which is especially useful for testing the networked agenda-setting effects.

New research on the network agenda-setting model will explore other connections among the elements on the two agendas – the media's and the public's – such as the links among the elements defining the first-level agenda and ultimately the complete set of networked relationships among the full set of first-level and second-level agenda elements.

Psychology of Agenda Setting

Agenda-setting effects at the first, second, and third level are not contemporary versions of the massive media effects theories, such as the bullet theory or the hypodermic model, popular in the early days of mass communication research. The media can stimulate agenda-setting effects at three levels, but the magnitude of these effects is moderated by a variety of individual differences. The most important of these moderator variables is the concept of need for orientation (NFO).

Grounded in the assumption that individuals feel psychologically uncomfortable in new settings until they achieve some degree of orientation to their new surroundings, NFO was a significant addition to agenda-setting theory that was introduced by David Weaver (1977) as part of a comprehensive study of the 1972 presidential election (Shaw & McCombs, 1977). NFO is defined by two lower-order concepts: relevance and uncertainty. The priority condition is relevance. We have little need for orientation toward numerous issues, public figures, and other public affairs topics in the world outside because we do not deem them relevant. In this situation, where relevance is low or nonexistent, NFO is low or nonexistent.

For those topics whose relevance is high, our level of uncertainty determines the strength of NFO. How much do we know? How much more, if at all, do we want to know? When relevance is high and uncertainty is low, the strength of NFO is moderate; and when relevance is high and uncertainty is high, the strength of NFO is high. Although uncertainty also defines NFO, it plays only a secondary role – one of distinguishing between moderate and high NFO for persons who consider a topic to be relevant. The key condition determining the impact of the media's agenda on the public's agenda is the relevance of the elements on the media's agenda.

Over the years, the relevance of public issues and of other topics and their attributes has been examined from a variety of perspectives. In line with the centripetal trend in contemporary agenda-setting research, closer attention to these studies recently reveals the theoretical gestalt diagramed in Figure 14.2.

In an innovative exploration of the dimensions of relevance, Evatt and Ghanem (2001) analyzed people's response to eight different public issues on a set of 13 semantic differential scales. These are seven-point rating scales anchored by bipolar adjectives or phrases. Analysis of these extensive data on people's perceptions of various public issues identified two substantive aspects of issue salience, social

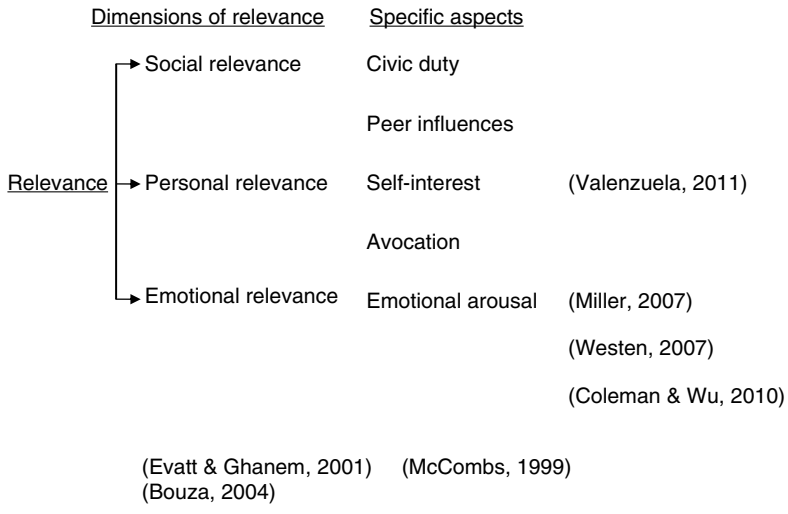

Figure 14.2 An explication of the concept of *relevance*.

relevance and personal relevance, and an affective aspect of issue salience, emotional relevance. Social salience was measured by scales such as "unimportant/important" and "irrelevant/relevant." Personal salience was measured by scales such as "matters to me/doesn't matter to me" and "of no concern to me/of concern to me." Emotional arousal was measured by scales such as boring/interesting and exciting/unexciting.

Bouza (2004, p. 250) advanced a similar theoretical distinction between social relevance and personal relevance to identify the *impact area* of political communication:

> individuals maintain an important area of personal interests that is separated, to a certain degree, from what that individual considers to be public interests or everyone's interests … This clear distinction between an area of personal interests and another area of public interests makes the existence of an area that I will define as the impact area of political communications possible … because it is the area in which the individual feels a clear coincidence between the country and himself …

Investigating the dimensions of relevance from a different perspective, McCombs (1999) explored why respondents named a particular issue in response to the widely used Gallup MIP question quoted earlier ("What is the most important problem facing this country today?"). His research used a set of survey items to probe various reasons why a person might have named a particular issue as the most important. Analysis of these data from state-wide surveys in Texas during 1992 and 1996 identified a stable set of five sources of issue relevance: self-interest, avocation, civic duty, peer influence, and emotional arousal. As Figure 14.2 indicates, these five motivations dovetail with Evatt and Ghanem's distinction between personal salience, social salience, and emotional salience.

With regard to the dimension of emotional salience, Drew Westen asserted in *The Political Brain*:

> the vision of mind that has captured the imagination of philosophers, cognitive scientists, economists, and political scientists since the eighteenth century – a *dispassionate mind* that makes decisions by weighing the evidence and reasoning to the most valid conclusions – bears no relation to how the mind and brain actually work. (Westen, 2007, p. ix)

In an experiment examining agenda-setting effects, Miller (2007) found that emotional responses to the news mediated these effects, specifically when exposure to news stories about the issue of crime resulted in participants feeling sad or afraid. Although these two specific emotional responses mediated the relationship between the media's agenda and the public's agenda, other emotional responses did not result in a greater likelihood of regarding crime as an important problem facing the nation. Altogether her experiment measured the extent to which participants felt angry, proud, hopeful, and happy as well as sad and afraid while reading news stories about crime. Only feelings of being sad or afraid mediated the agenda-setting effect. Additional analysis indicated that neither a general measure of emotional arousal nor a general measure of valence created from combinations of all six emotional responses explained the link between exposure to crime news and naming crime as an important issue facing the nation. However, the creation of negative valence did result in a greater likelihood of naming crime.

Coleman and Wu's (2010) investigation of the affective impact of visual information presented in TV news programs introduced a further theoretical distinction between two components of affective attributes: affect as emotion and affect as cognitive evaluations in positive and negative terms. Key among Coleman and Wu's findings, the agenda-setting effects of nonverbal expressions such as eye contact and smiling are greater on the audiences' emotions, defined as feelings, than on their cognitive assessments of character traits, the most common way affect is measured in agenda-setting studies.

Taking a new approach to what defines the personal relevance of public issues for an individual, Valenzuela (2011) found that Inglehart's (1977, 1990) concept of materialist and post-materialist values is a strong moderator of agenda-setting effects. Using a content analysis of major daily newspapers across Canada and survey data from a nationally representative sample interviewed during the 2006 Canadian national election, Valenzuela found that at both the aggregate and the individual levels there were stronger agenda-setting effects among persons with materialist values than among persons with post-materialist values. At the aggregate level, the correlation between the media's agenda and the public's agenda was +0.55 for materialists and +0.35 for post-materialists. These findings are consistent with the media's more prominent coverage of materialist issues such as the economy and crime, by comparison to post-materialist issues such as the environment and political reform. Further analysis at the individual level used an

index of post-materialist values to predict susceptibility to agenda setting (Wanta, 1997). Controlling for demographics and political involvement, people with materialist values were more susceptible than people with post-materialist values to the influence of an agenda of the media that was dominated by materialist issues.

Conclusion

In line with Walter Lippmann's thesis that the news media are our key bridge between "the world outside and the pictures in our heads," the decades of agenda-setting research from Chapel Hill to the present have identified three levels of influence of the news media in the public sphere. In addition, a key psychological concept, need for orientation, identifies the circumstances under which people follow the lead of the media's agenda or downplay or even ignore it.

At the first level, the news media focus the public's attention on the major issues or topics of the day and influence its perceptions of what the most important ones are. At the second level, the news media structure the public's knowledge of these topics, in particular, its notion of what the most salient attributes or aspects of these topics are. And the new research on the third level of agenda-setting effects finds that the news media can influence an integrated picture of these attributes. All three levels demonstrate a key social role for the news media in citizens' participation in public affairs.

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15

The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Approach as a Lens for Studying Social Media Practice

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Introduction

The uses and gratifications (U&G) approach has a longstanding history in communication research and mass communication (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). At the core of the theory is the aim to understand how, why, and with what purpose people use media in their everyday lives. The theory has provided numerous insights into how television, the radio, and print resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and books) have been adopted by mass audiences. While some scholars have dismissed the value of the U&G approach, Ruggiero (2000) has argued that "any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory must seriously include the U&G approach" (p. 3). With the large proliferation of social media – in particular among young people – the approach seems to regain interest among scholars, as it can provide valuable insights into (1) what social media are adopted; (2) the uses of social media; and (3) what motivates adoption of different sites and services. Also of great relevance is to investigate what aspects of these social media sites and services keep users engaged and encourage them to devote large amounts of time and effort to writing themselves and their communities into digital space (boyd & Heer, 2006; Sundén, 2003). Understanding these research questions is not irrelevant, as 64 percent of adults (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2011) and 80 percent of youth use a social network site (SNS) (Lenhart et al., 2011). In the 12–17 age group, 40 percent of users log on to a SNS several times a day and 24 percent about once a day (Lenhart et al., 2011). Taking into account the widespread diffusion of social media and its ubiquity, it is important to grasp the role that these tools play in our society and what

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social, economic, and political impact they have on individuals, family ties, communities, and organizations.

In this chapter we investigate how the U&G approach can be applied to the study of social media, describing its potential for yielding new insights as well as its methodological challenges. The chapter starts with a general overview of the approach that includes definitions of key concepts, an outline of central tenets, and an overview of the historical context in which it developed. Then the chapter provides an extensive review of the scholarly work that has integrated U&G into the study of how social media are being used in society as well as what gratifications are sought and obtained from their use. The chapter also discusses findings that compare these gratifications across social media sites and services, contrasting Facebook with instant messaging directly; and there is also a discussion of how privacy issues associated with the use of social media affect the types of gratifications that users obtain from their visits to the sites. This body of work helps us to better understand why people integrate various and diverse social media sites into their communication and socializing practices, routines, and habits.

Uses and Gratifications Approach

Prior to examining how the U&G approach has been applied to the study of social media, we provide an overview of the key concepts and tenets of the approach, we discuss its strengths and weaknesses, and we show the various shifts and updates the theoretical paradigm has undergone (for an overview, see Brown & Quan-Haase, 2012).

The value of the U&G approach can be best understood when discussed in a historical context. Much of the early work on media and their relation to audiences tended to focus on the unidirectional and powerful effect of media content on audience members' views and behaviors (Blumler & Katz, 1974). In some scholarly work (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1964), for instance in the hypodermic needle model, also known as the magic bullet theory, the audience was conceived as a homogeneous mass that consumes content in an uncritical and superficial manner. In this body of work, the audience does not engage with the content presented in the mass media but rather tends to be passive, absorbing content without much critical analysis. From this viewpoint, the media serve as a means to directly persuade and influence people's opinions and behaviors. While it is true that mass media, for example the cinema during Nazi Germany, have been utilized as a means of propaganda (Fox, 2007; Welch, 1983), many of these early models were quickly disproved, as they tended to simplify the complex ways in which audience members use, consume, and make sense of media messages. Moreover, with work by McLuhan (1964) and others at the Toronto School of Communication, the attention shifted from the content toward the effects of the media as tools to convey messages.

As part of this move away from deterministic models of media influence, new theoretical frameworks started to emerge in the 1940s to better characterize the

complex interrelation between audience and media (Ruggiero, 2000). Of particular prominence has been the development of U&G as a theoretical lens and empirical means for studying how audiences engage with the media and integrate them into their everyday lives. Three characteristics of U&G have distinguished it from prior approaches:

1 *Conceptualization of the audience* The U&G approach is set apart from other theories by the way in which it conceptualizes the audience. In terms of how they exert power and control over the audience, the mass media and their messages are given a less prominent role than was customary in other theories, such as the hypodermic needle model. The mass audience is rather conceived of as engaged and actively participating in its media choices. What is particularly relevant in this approach is its focus on specific audiences. Instead of characterizing the audience as homogenous, it takes into account media preferences by specific groups in society, such as children, youth, and seniors. The assumption is that not all groups in society are exposed to the same kind of media and messages, but rather different groups have different tastes, habits, and practices. It is the recognition of this diversity that is central to the study of audiences and media consumption. This issue of audience fragmentation will be discussed below in relation to Web 2.0 tools and services and the tailoring of messages to audience preferences.
2 *Focus on what people do* The largest part of the research prior to 1940 tended to examine the extent to which messages influenced people's behavior, attitude, and opinion. This approach to studying the mass media was largely criticized on the grounds that it was difficult to directly observe how mass media have an impact on individuals. Moreover, any impact of media messages on individuals may be in the long term, stretching over years, or even decades. As a result, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), who are among the early proponents of the U&G approach, suggested that research should move away from a focus on impact alone and start looking more at what people do with the media. This should include an analysis of who uses what media, how often they use these media, and in what social, historical, and economic contexts. They also stressed the relevance of investigating what factors have an impact on how individuals make choices about their media usage. Some of the factors that shape people's consumption of media include religious beliefs, personal interests, social roles, and life circumstances. For instance, someone who is single and has no children will have more time to watch TV or update his or her Facebook status than someone who is married and has young kids. This shows that life circumstances are important considerations when studying how people integrate media into their everyday lives. People make sense of messages from the media on the basis of these factors, and therefore media use needs to be understood as an individual choice instead of being examined from the standpoint of media impact (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974).
3 *Media gratifications sought and obtained* Central to the uses and gratifications approach is the study of media gratifications. The phrase *media gratifications* is

defined as consisting of two elements: (1) gratifications sought (also often referred to as "needs" or "motives"); and (2) gratifications obtained (Katz, Gurevitch, &, Haas 1973). Quan-Haase and Brown (2013) have argued: "we conceive of the audience as actively choosing and using media in response to specific needs or goals, the foundations for examining the identifiable gratifications that the media provide are in place" (p. 689). The distinction between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained is important as the former are about what individuals expect from a medium before they use it for the first time, while the latter are the gratifications audience members actually experience through the use of a particular medium after adoption.

Examining gratifications sought is of relevance when media are first introduced into a social group. This moment is critical because individuals determine whether or not a medium will be of potential advantage to them. The process of adopting a new medium is filled with uncertainty for potential adopters, because they cannot predict to what extent a new technology can yield the expected and needed outcomes (Rogers, 2003). For instance, the new Apple iPad appears to be appealing to consumers, as the new device provides the flexibility of downloading e-books, surfing the web, and checking email and, most importantly, is able to annotate and edit text in a flexible manner (Quan-Haase, 2012). This multimedia device also provides a wide range of entertainment capabilities, including watching movies on demand, creating a complex music library, and participating in both single-player and multiplayer online games. The iPad can fulfill a number of different needs, as it can provide entertainment, news, and content. It can also fulfill other social needs, such as allowing for mobility, flexibility, and information on the go. The device itself is a symbol of prestige and of how digitally savvy a person is. On the other hand, potential adopters need to consider uncertainties surrounding the new device. There could be other tools developed that are more powerful, have a more diverse functionality, and are perhaps more cost-effective. It is also uncertain how many e-books will be available on the iPad as competitors try to offer more content. For example, the Nook and Kindle carry Gutenberg's 1.8 million free books on top of 500,000 titles they make available to their users at no cost. The example of the iPad shows how investigating motivations for adoption and the kinds of factors that affect this process is of relevance and is a topic that continues to be of interest to scholars in a Web 2.0 environment.

The study of gratifications does not only examine separately gratifications sought and gratifications obtained, but also tries to discern how the two are related. While users may have concrete expectations of what needs a medium may fulfill, these needs may not necessarily overlap with the actual gratifications obtained once they start using it. The resulting gap between obtained gratifications and sought ones can predict the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction that individuals experience from the usage of a particular medium (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980). Recurrent use of a medium and user habits and routines result from a specific medium either meeting the expectations or surpassing

them (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). There are also cases where individuals obtain positive, unexpected benefits from a medium. If the expected gratifications are not obtained, individuals will stop utilizing the medium. Media usage patterns are a constant negotiation between what needs an individual has at any given moment in his or her life course, what media are available to fill these needs, and how various media compare in their ability to satisfy these needs.

The U&G approach has been very fruitful, as scholars have examined uses, gratifications sought, and gratifications obtained from a wide range of media, including television (e.g., Bantz, 1982), newspaper readership (Berelson, 1949), radio (Cantril & Allport, 1935), and other traditional media (e.g., Dimmick, Sikand, & Patterson, 1994). With the large proliferation of SNSs, blogging, microblogging, and video and photo sharing sites since the early 2000s, a body of work is emerging that employs the U&G approach to examine social media (e.g., LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin, 2001; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Owing to its focus on active audience members, individual choices, and divergent populations, the U&G approach seems particularly well suited to addressing questions of why and how individuals are adopting social media.

What Are Social Media?

Social media as a concept gained prominence with the development of SNSs such as MySpace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004. SNSs are web sites in which users create a profile and link that profile to others, to create a personal network. More recently, the microblogging web site Twitter has become popular. Launched in July 2006, Twitter enables users to share content via periodic status updates, known as tweets, which consist of short messages of 140 characters in length (Asur & Huberman, 2010). Other popular social media applications include YouTube, a video-sharing web site that enables users to upload and share video content; LinkedIn, a social networking site created to help users manage and expand their professional social networks; and Pinterest, an online Pin Board that allows users to organize and to share interesting visual content from the Web.

In social media environments, "users" become active participants creating content, commenting and disliking/liking content, and forwarding links to content. This contrasts with how information was utilized, created, and shared in Web 1.0, where users showed minimal interactivity and engagement (Bruns, 2008). As suggested by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), a formal definition of social media requires an understanding of two concepts that are often associated or used in conjunction with the term: Web 2.0 and user-generated content (UGC). Web 2.0 describes a shift in the way software developers and end-users use the Web: rather than being a platform in which content and applications are created by individuals, the Web has become a space in which content is continuously modified by users in a participatory and collaborative fashion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In this way, Web 2.0 can be considered the platform on which users engage with

social media sites and services. In terms of UGC, this refers to content that is generated by end-users and is publicly available, at no cost, outside of the professional routines and practices of traditional corporate environments (Brown & Quan-Haase, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Axel Bruns (2008) introduced the term *produsage* to describe this new mode of production responsible for the creation of digital content in Web 2.0 environments. According to Bruns, this mode is

> built on iterative, evolutionary development models in which often very large communities of participants make a number of usually very small, incremental changes to the established knowledge base, thereby enabling a gradual improvement in quality which – under the right conditions – can nonetheless outpace the speed of production development in the conventional, industrial model. (Bruns, 2008, p. 1)

These new forms of "produsing" and engaging with content offer audience members more control, making it particularly relevant to examine the gratifications that social media provide to users, in comparison to traditional media (Lin, 2001; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

Taken together, social media refer, then, to a group of sites, services, and applications that are built on the technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow users to create content, share it, bookmark it, and like/dislike it (Asur & Huberman, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some of the questions of relevance from a U&G approach to social media are:

- What social media sites and services are individuals using?
- Are specific social groups adopting a subset of social media tools?
- How are different social groups using the social media?
- What gratifications lead different social groups to adopt social media?
- What gratifications do these social media provide to individuals after they started using the service? Do these gratifications change over time? Over the life course?

When examining the current media use landscape, it becomes clear that individuals often use more than one type of social media. This suggests that each type of social media fulfills a distinct need, making an analysis of U&G essential (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). The U&G approach has perhaps become of greater relevance and has a greater contribution to make in an environment where audiences are fragmented and where there is an increase in choice.

Uses and Gratifications of Social Media

The study of social media from a U&G perspective focuses on two central themes. The first theme examines how individuals use social media, including what types of social media they employ, how often they use these tools, and how they access

these social media sites and services (e.g., on a laptop, on a mobile device, or on a desktop; from home, from work, or on the go). The second theme investigates why individuals have chosen to adopt specific social media applications to keep in touch with their social networks. This includes an analysis of the gratifications sought as well as of the gratifications obtained following the adoption of a social media site or service. First we examine in the next sections the uses of social media, focusing in particular on Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr, and then we review the pertinent literature on gratifications brought by social media.

The uses of social media

Social media have quickly gained enormous popularity worldwide. In 2012, Facebook and Twitter had 901 million and 175 million users worldwide, respectively.

Social network sites (SNS)

The concept of social media gained popularity with the emergence of SNSs such as MySpace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004. Broadly speaking, SNSs are web sites that allow users to create a profile and link that profile to others, to create a personal network (boyd, 2006). While SNSs differ, a core of key common features can be identified: (1) within the site users construct a profile that provides personal information, with the intention of finding or being found by others; (2) most sites allow anyone to join, while requiring user authorization before friendship connections can be made; and (3) upon joining the service, new members are usually asked to provide personal information, such as name, age and email address, as well as a picture of themselves and a self-description (Young, 2008). Facebook is one of the most popular SNSs worldwide, with more than 900 million users as of April 2012 (Goldman, 2012). Canadian data indicate that email is being substituted for Web 2.0 sites and services (Moretti, 2010); in the 13–17 and 18–24 age groups, a total of 77 percent and 82 percent, respectively, are now using Facebook more than email.

Blogs

Blogs, which are characterized by discrete entries (or posts) that are typically displayed in reverse chronological order, the most recent entry being displayed first, represent one of the earliest forms of social media (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004). Typically blogs are maintained by either an individual or a small group of people, and they are focused on a single topic of interest. In 2005, the PEW reported that one quarter of Americans read blogs and as many as 9 percent have created their own blog (Rainie, 2005).

Microblogging

More recently, the microblogging web site Twitter has gained popularity. Launched in July 2006, Twitter enables users to share content via periodic status updates, known as tweets, which consist of short messages of 140 characters in length

(Asur & Huberman, 2010). In general, content shared on Twitter tends to consist of personal information about users, news, or links to content such as videos, images, or articles. Twitter is particularly popular among 25- to 34-year-olds; indeed, nearly one fifth of Internet users in this age group used the status update service in 2011, an increase of nearly 50 percent since 2010 (Smith, 2011).

Motivations for social media adoption

The U&G theory provides a basis for examining what motivates users to adopt social media and what gratifications they hope to derive from their use. As with traditional forms of media, individuals' reasons for adopting social media are likely to vary according to the medium selected and its characteristics. While a number of studies have examined the motivations for continued use of social media, only a few studies have examined the motivations for adopting social media in the first place (e.g., Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Johnson & Yang, 2009; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Quan-Haase and Young (2010), in their study on the U&G of Facebook and IM (instant messaging), for example, identified friend recommendations as a key motivator for adopting Facebook ("friend suggested it"), followed by mass adoption by one's offline social network ("everyone I know is on Facebook") and social relationship maintenance ("help others keep in touch with me"). By contrast, Dunne, Lawlor and Rowley (2010), in their study of young people's use of Bebo, found that users adopted the SNS to communicate with others, to make new friends, and to alleviate boredom – or to escape. As for the microblogging site Twitter, Johnson and Yang (2009) identified social motivations (e.g., entertainment, relaxation, and communication) and informational motivations (e.g., meeting new people, giving and receiving advice, and sharing information) as the key factors determining the adoption of Twitter.

Examining why users adopt a specific social media site or service is of importance, considering the large number of competing services available. The adoption and use of social media follow social trends whereby one social media platform becomes popular, reaches high rates of penetration, and then starts to diminish in popularity and frequency of use as other forms of social media gain prominence. Understanding questions about how users make decisions about what new platforms to test and adopt, when to abandon one platform for another, and how to evaluate various platforms becomes of great relevance.

Gratifications obtained from social media use

In addition to investigating motives for adopting social media, research can also examine the types of gratifications users have obtained following their adoption of a social media tool. An examination of this nature is particularly beneficial because it provides insight into what motivates continued use of a particular medium. A number of studies have been conducted that have systematically investigated the gratifications obtained from social media use. For example, an early study examining students' motivations for chatting on the IM platform ICQ found that

students used ICQ primarily for affection: to express appreciation, care for others' feelings, show encouragement, offer help, and show concern for others (Leung, 2001). More recently, a number of studies have emerged examining the gratifications obtained from using SNSs, particularly Facebook. This research has found that affection, while a key motivation for using IM, is of less importance in SNSs (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). In contrast to IM, SNSs are used to pass the time – for example, for entertainment, relaxation, and as a means of escape (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010); for social surveillance and social searching – for example, to learn about others without their explicit knowledge (Joinson, 2008; Zhang, Shing-Tung Tang, & Leung, 2011); and for relationship maintenance – for example, to reconnect with friends and family and to maintain a connection with friends and family (Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). This illustrates clear differences in the gratifications obtained from each type of social media. While IM is typically dyadic and allows for interactive conversations in real-time that mirror, in some aspects, face-to-face communication, Facebook and other SNSs revolve around a profile and a series of asynchronous messages exchanged via private e-mail messages or wall posts. In this way, IM exchanges support feelings and intimacy and the development of close ties (Hu, Wood, Smith, & Westbrook, 2004), whereas the communications in SNSs serve as a way for users to have fun and entertain themselves.

The social dimension of Facebook is also reflected in the gratifications obtained from Twitter use. For example, Chen (2011) found a strong correlation between frequency of tweets and the need to connect with others. That is, those Twitter users who tweeted the most did so in order to gratify their need for social connection. In line with this finding, Johnson and Yang (2009) identified social motives as key motivating factors predicting the use of Twitter; individuals used Twitter, in part, to maintain contact with friends and family, to communicate with many people simultaneously, and to pass the time. In contrast to Facebook, however, research also suggests that Twitter serves an informational function. In addition to using Twitter for social purposes, users also use the service to participate in discussions, share information with others, and learn interesting things (Johnson & Yang, 2009).

Using the motivating factors identified in Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011), Smock, Ellison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011) expanded the research on U&G and SNSs to include an examination of how people's motivations for using Facebook influence their use of specific features on the site, namely status updates, comments, wall posts, private messages, Facebook chat, and Facebook groups. The results showed that people's motivations for using Facebook predicted their choice of the different features. For example, expression information sharing was correlated with status updates, whereas social interaction was correlated with Facebook chat. The results also showed that features that shared similar capabilities, such as comments and writing on friends' walls, did not necessarily share the same underlying motivations for use. These results suggest that, even within a single social media tool, *motivations for use can vary by feature*, and that features with similar functionalities may not necessarily elicit the same motivations for use.

Table 15.1 Gratifications obtained from Facebook and Instant Messaging. Adapted from Quan-Haase & Young, 2010.

I use Facebook …	*Facebook*	*Instant Messaging*
Pastime		
To kill time	✓	✓
Because it is entertaining	✓	✓
Because I enjoy it	✓	✓
Because it is fun	✓	✓
Because it is a pleasant rest	✓	✓
Because it relaxes me		✓
To get away from pressures and responsibilities	✓	✓
To get away from what I am doing	✓	
To put off something I should be doing	✓	
Affection		
To thank people		✓
To let people know I care about them	✓	✓
To show others encouragement		✓
To help others		✓
To show others that I am concerned about them		✓
Fashion		
To not look old-fashioned		
To look stylish		
To look fashionable		
Share problems		
Because I need someone to talk to or be with		✓
Because I just need to talk about my problems sometimes		✓
To forget about my problems		
Sociability		
To make friends of the opposite sex		
To be less inhibited chatting with strangers		✓
To meet people (new acquaintances)		✓
Social know		
To feel involved with what's going on with other people	✓	✓

In addition to feature functionality, motivations for use can also vary by content type. In their study of content watching and content sharing on YouTube, Hanson and Haridakis (2008) found that, while watching traditional news clips was motivated by a desire for information seeking, watching comedy news clips was motivated by a desire for leisure entertainment. The study also revealed that males who were motivated by a desire for leisure entertainment were more likely than their female counterparts to watch comedy news on YouTube. In terms of content sharing, the study found similar results for sharing both traditional and comedy news; that is, individuals shared both traditional news clips and comedy news clips when they were motivated by a desire for interpersonal communication. In line with Smock et al. (2011), these results suggest that different characteristics of a social media tool are likely to

predict different motivations for use. In the case of Hanson and Haridakis (2008), users may be driven by one set of motives for watching news clips and another set of motives for sharing news clips.

Impact of privacy concerns on social media use

The extent to which social media are used may be influenced by an individual's level of concern for privacy – that is, by how concerned he or she is about both known and unknown others gaining access to personal or private information. This concern is likely to influence the types and amount of personal information shared on social media sites, which, in turn, will affect the gratifications obtained from using social media. For example, if an individual is concerned about an employer gaining access to her social network site (SNS) profile, she may limit the types of photos she posts on her profile. Although this act of self-concealment may aid in audience segmentation (Goffman, 1959), it may also affect her ability to engage with and relate to her friends and peers on the site.

More generally, research on information disclosure on the Internet suggests a correlation between concern for Internet privacy and the disclosure behaviors of Internet users (Viseu, Clement, & Aspinall, 2003). For example, a 2000 Pew Internet research survey found that, out of 45 percent of the individuals who have not provided real personal information to access a Web site, 61 percent identify as "hard-core privacy defenders." These individuals refuse to provide personal information to use an Internet site because they believe that Internet tracking is harmful, that their online activities are not private, and that there is a need to be concerned about businesses obtaining their personal information. Research has also suggested that individuals with a comparably low level of concern for Internet privacy tend to be much more forthcoming and open with the disclosure of their personal information online. Thus the gratifications obtained by people willing to disclose personal information online in exchange for a specific benefit differ from the gratifications obtained by those who choose not to disclose personal information.

More recently, a body of literature has started to emerge examining the impact of privacy on self-disclosure in SNSs. Tufekci (2007), for instance, found that concern about unwanted audiences had an impact on whether or not students revealed their real name on MySpace and on whether or not they revealed their religious affiliation on MySpace and Facebook. Young and Quan-Haase (2009) showed that, in order to address their privacy concerns, students enact a number of privacy strategies on Facebook such as excluding contact information, using private email messages, and altering the visibility of their profile. Moreover, a recent PEW Internet study found that 50 percent of users between the ages of 18 and 29 have removed a wall post, and 40 percent have untagged themselves in a photo (Madden & Smith, 2010). The falsification of information on SNSs has also been identified in the literature as a frequently used privacy protection strategy (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2008; Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

As suggested above, the ways in which users address their privacy concerns affect the types of gratifications they obtain from SNSs. For example, using a moniker in place of one's real name on MySpace may have implications for finding and being found by friends and peers on the site. As Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) suggest, the inclusion of certain profile elements – such as a self-description, a statement of relationship status, a description of one's interests, and a photograph of oneself – enables users to signal aspects of their identity, which then assist others in making decisions about declaring friendship links. Moreover, Jenny Sundén (2003) argues that, in order for individuals to exist online, they must first write themselves into being. In SNSs such as Facebook, the process of writing oneself into existence occurs through the construction of a profile, which reveals personal information about the user. Thus, by excluding information in an effort to address one's privacy concerns, users effectively limit the types of gratifications they can obtain from their use of SNSs.

Limitations and Challenges

The U&G approach has made an important contribution to addressing questions about what choices individuals make about media use, historical changes in how individuals use media and in what gratifications they seek and obtain from different media. Despite the unique contribution of the U&G approach to the field of communication, Internet studies, and sociology, it is also important to realize the limitations and challenges involved in employing this theory to the study of social media. These limitations and challenges need to be carefully considered in evaluating research in this area and before embarking on further research that relies on this theoretical lens. In this section we start by discussing the key limitations of the U&G approach and then we outline some of the challenges that are specific to the social media.

Scholars have raised a number of criticisms against the U&G approach. Ruggiero (2000) summarizes the following four key criticisms as outlined in the literature:

1 *Focus on individual* U&G theory focuses on individuals and their media choices without giving much consideration to the social context of media use. Individual choices are, however, influenced by social norms, peer pressure, and social, historical, political, and economic trends. Neglecting to study the context of use provides a narrow focus, making it difficult to examine the societal implications of media use.
2 *Diffuse typologies* Across studies a wide range of gratifications have been proposed, with distinct and diffuse typologies. This disparity in the literature makes it difficult for scholars to compare research findings and to develop internally coherent theoretical frameworks.
3 *Problems with definitions* In the U&G literature focal concepts such as uses, gratifications sought, gratifications obtained, and needs have not been used consistently, and this has led to a multiplicity of concepts and meanings.

4 *Audience conceptualization* Finally, the fundamental presupposition of an active audience, which autonomously controls the choices made regarding its media consumption patterns and is able to accurately report on its own motivations to use a particular medium, has been called into question because it may be a little simplistic or naïve.

On the one hand, some of the criticisms scholars have raised about the U&G approach are not unique to this theory, but rather are found in other fields of study as well. For instance, difficulties with definitions and diffuse typologies are inherent in many other fields. On the other hand, some criticisms are unique to the theory. Perhaps the most fundamental one is that this theory is "simplistically functional, and lacking sophistication and nuance in an area of study that demands complex formulations and understandings" (Quan-Haase and Brown, 2013, p. 692). Additionally, the U&G approach does not address the impact of macro-level phenomena on media use, for instance the role of ownership and control in mass media and the social, political, and economic consequences of media consumption. This limits the scope of the U&G approach to micro-level phenomena and does not allow for the study of research problems linked to political economy, globalization, inequality, and so on.

What complicates the study of the U&G is the constant changes that occur in how individuals use social media and integrate it into their everyday lives. This is directly linked to changes that occur in the types of social media available and to the needs these media fulfill. New social media sites and services are introduced at a rapid pace and existing ones are frequently updated with additional features, new policies, and interfaces. Users tend to migrate to new social media sites and services and to adopt several tools at the same time (Hogan & Quan-Haase, 2010; Quan-Haase, 2008). For instance, instant messaging was the preferred tool of choice between 1998 and 2004 (Quan-Haase, 2007, 2008). With the introduction of Facebook, the use of instant messaging dropped and the service was largely reintegrated into Facebook and Skype. Since 2006 Twitter has taken off, and many people own both a Twitter and a Facebook account.

Another important consideration when examining research in the area of U&G is its sole reliance on self-reported data. To examine the uses of social media, participants are usually asked to report what media they employ, how often they use these media, and what role they play in their everyday life. It is, however, difficult to assess the accuracy of these reports, as few studies validate the findings using behavioral or observational measures. This is a clear limitation, as reliance on behavioral or observational data is more precise than reliance on self-reports. This limitation is less applicable to the study of gratifications than it is to the study of the use of social media, because gratifications are, to a large extent, "perceived" by the user.

A third area of criticism relates to the population under investigation. Consistently, the study of U&G employs undergraduate students as its population. This creates problems of generalization, as this population tends to be

between 17 and 24 years of age, more educated, and from families of higher socioeconomic status.[1] In addition, Quan-Haase (2007) argued that university students are a unique population to study social media on, because of five factors. First, university students can be considered digital natives (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Prensky, 2001), because "they are less aware of a pre-Internet world as they are of one in which the Net is central to their communication" (Jones & Madden, 2002, p. 6). Second, university students use the Internet frequently in comparison to the average Internet user (Jones & Madden, 2002). Third, university students engage in a diverse set of activities online: they email, IM, surf the web, play online games, and participate in e-commerce. Not only do they engage in a wider range of activities, but they perform any one of these online activities more frequently than the general population (Jones & Madden, 2002). Fourth, university students have also been described as heavy users of social media (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Fifth, university students have variable schedules, with considerable periods of unstructured time that provide them with greater flexibility to be socially accessible to peers and family than high-school students and people in the workforce (Baron, Squires, Tench, & Thompson, 2005; Quan-Haase & Collins, 2008).

All these factors together influence not only how social media are used, but also the kinds of gratifications sought and obtained. As a result, it is difficult to generalize from university students to the general population, who may use social media less and may also use it for obtaining different kinds gratifications.

Conclusions

The study of social media from a U&G perspective can provide important insights into how pervasive and ubiquitous these tools are in our society, what tools specifically have been adopted and by what segments of the population, how and how often these tools are used, and how individuals are accessing these tools. Moreover, a substantive body of scholarship is accumulating about the gratifications sought and obtained from social media sites and services, providing a richer picture of what motivates individuals to spend so much of their time, energy, and effort on these sites. Therefore the approach continues to have great relevance to the field of communication studies, Internet studies, and sociology.

We conclude, from our review of the literature, that each social media tool supports unique communication needs and therefore does not necessarily replace other media tools. The same medium may elicit different motivations for use – motivations based on system features. Features with similar functionality within a system may not elicit the same motivations for use. Factors such as privacy may affect the types of gratifications users obtain from social media; addressing privacy concerns may limit abilities to get full use of a system.

Note

1 Socioeconomic status refers to a person's work experience and to this person's (or this person's family's) economic and social position.

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16

The Media's Impact on Perceptions of Political Polarization

Jeffrey Crouch and Mark J. Rozell

Introduction

Is the United States so polarized between Democratic and Republican supporters engaged in a culture war that we have become, as Bill Clinton's former pollster Stanley Greenberg and others have contended, "Two Americas"? (See Greenberg, 2004; see also Abramowitz, 2010; Abramowitz & Saunders, 2005.) Or are Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2006) correct when they argue in *Culture War?* that there is no such polarization? (See also Fiorina & Abrams, 2009.) More importantly for our purposes, what role do the mass media play in the polarization motif?

In the following chapter we argue that the mass media contribute significantly to perceptions of political polarization in the United States. Matthew Levendusky highlights the importance of the mass media in this context, arguing that "[party] elites have become increasingly polarized over time," which matters – given how "the mass media play a vital role in transmitting information about elite positions to ordinary voters" (Levendusky, 2009, pp. 18, 30–31). Media portrayals may accurately reflect stark divisions among the *political elites* with whom top journalists regularly interact, but those divisions are not as strongly apparent among average citizens. Nevertheless, news and opinion media emphasize conflict in the political arena and describe the country as deeply divided.

Evidence for a polarized country is not as clear as media portrayals of contemporary political conflicts might suggest. Scholars continue to debate the polarization thesis, whereas the media have largely declared deep divisiveness in the country as the reality. Thus our task here is not to try to settle the debate over whether the country is politically polarized, but rather to discuss and

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analyze the contributions of the mass media to the persistence of the belief that the USA today is deeply divided ideologically.

More specifically, we suggest that, consistently with the argument of Fiorina and his colleagues (2006), the mass media have perpetuated the culture war theme. As will be shown, the mass media set the agenda for news coverage (on this, see generally Jamieson & Waldman, 2003); and the culture war frame allows the media to pursue the news values of novelty, negativity, and conflict, which attract readers and viewers and, ultimately, advertising dollars (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003, pp. xii–xiii). The rise of cable television and of the Internet has only exacerbated the mass media's tendency to portray politics as a contest of winners and losers such as a war, a horserace, or some other zero-sum event (Fallows, 1997; Patterson, 1994).

Because of their own professional perches, leading journalists routinely talk to and interact with political elites who reinforce the culture war frame. It is not surprising therefore that they present those opinions as representative of the typical American, and thus contribute to the exaggeration of partisan polarization. We do not contend that polarization does not exist; rather we perceive the issue to be multifaceted and complex, and we acknowledge that sufficient evidence exists to suggest some merit to the belief in the existence of polarization. But we also believe that contemporary media in the USA amplify and exaggerate polarization, and that reporting and commentary about political divisiveness in the country have real consequences.

The "Culture War" Theme

Is America at war with itself? Stepping back for a moment, we will review the main arguments on both sides of the culture war divide. Greenberg and others suggest that there is a battle for the soul of America between "red" Republican and "blue" Democratic states, and that the two are so different that it is difficult to communicate across clearly drawn battle lines (Greenberg, 2004). On one side are Republican loyalists, who vote on the basis of "God, guns and gays." They are opposed by Democratic loyalists, who are secular, pro gun control and pro gay rights. The mass media have picked up on this theme and its tantalizing map, which shows America with deep blue coasts and a dark crimson mid-section.

In their 2006 work *Culture War?* Morris Fiorina and co-authors Samuel Abrams and Jeremy Pope took on the then prevailing consensus that America was being rent asunder by internal partisan division. According to the authors, "[t]he simple truth is that there is no culture war in the United States." They draw a distinction between – on one hand – political "activists" and "cause groups" whose animosities toward one another are not held by the "great mass" of the public, and – on the other hand – average Americans, who "are for the most part moderate in their views and tolerant in their manner" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 8).

National Election Studies (NES) data show that Americans are quite moderate: there was little daylight between the positions of red-state voters and those of blue-state voters on a variety of issues in 2004. Almost as many blue as red-state voters (45 percent to 46 percent) believed that immigration should decrease; 24 percent of red-state voters and 31 percent of blue-state voters favored the environment over jobs; 34 percent of red-state voters preferred school vouchers to 29 percent of blue-state voters; 72 percent of red-state voters favored the death penalty to 65 percent of their blue-state counterparts; 55 percent of red-state voters and 53 percent of blue-state voters wanted the government to ensure fair treatment of blacks in employment; 21 percent of red- and 13 percent of blue-state voters supported hiring preferences for blacks; 51 percent of red- and 63 percent of blue-state voters favored stricter gun control – and so on (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 49). Separately, Hetherington and Oppenheimer also found that, despite "all the talk, evidence that ordinary citizens are polarized is surprisingly scant" (Hetherington & Oppenheimer, 2008, 2–3).

If politics seems more extreme, Fiorina and colleagues argue that it is the *candidates* who are different: "increased polarization of electoral choices results entirely from movement by the candidates, not the voters, who by assumption stayed exactly the same" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 29). At the microlevel, those blue and red states, the authors argue, are really purple. They find that, rather than there being polarized partisans of one party or another in 2000, "[i]n both red and blue states, the largest group of people classified themselves as moderates" (Fiorina et al., 2006, pp. 36–37).

Indeed the percentages of self-identified Republicans or Democrats within a state were not much different and did not change much from 2000 to 2004. An NES study conducted in 2000 suggested that in red states Democratic self-identification was 32 percent, while Republican self-identification was 34 percent (liberal self-identification was 11 percent and conservative self-identification was 31 percent). In blue states, too, the numbers were quite close: 40 percent self-identified as Democrats; 25 percent as Republicans; 20 percent as liberal; and 24 percent as conservative (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 43). In 2004 those numbers were relatively stable: in red states, Democratic self-identification was 32 percent; Republican self-identification was 33 percent; liberal self-identification was 9 percent; and conservative self-identification was 22 percent. In blue states, 32 percent self-identified as Democrats; 25 percent as Republicans; 14 percent as liberal; and 18 percent as conservative (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 47; see also Levendusky, 2009). The parties have become more distinct, Fiorina admits, but not because of polarization: "What has happened is that partisans have become better sorted into the parties than in past decades" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 9).

Among the factors that Fiorina and colleagues blame for the misperception of widespread polarization – misreading the election results, failing to adequately examine public opinion surveys, and listening to the unreliable and self-serving claims of issue groups – is "selective coverage by an uncritical media [*sic*] more

concerned with news value than with getting the story right" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 8). In their analysis recent election results seem to bear this interpretation out, as "policy differences among red and blue state residents were far smaller in 2000 and 2004 than generally assumed" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 34). The authors suggest that, as in 2000,

> any interpretation of the 2004 voting as a manifestation of a culture war between red and blue states rests on the weak underpinnings of 10–12 point differences on a few issues that most Americans did not consider to be very important. (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 51)

Among those more divisive issues, Fiorina and his team identify abortion and gay marriage as two of the key "moral values" issues that the mainstream media mistakenly identified as keys to the election. They contend that the electoral impact of such issues as abortion and gay marriage was much less significant than portrayed by many in the media (2006, pp. 149, 49).[1] In fact, rather than moral values, Fiorina and colleagues argue that "the defining issues in the 2004 election were leadership in the war on terrorism and homeland security" (2006, p. 51). They explain the cause of the misunderstanding as "pack journalism," whereby problems that should have been spotted by the more knowledgeable media commentators were instead ignored by these journalists, who followed conventional analysis, without digging more deeply into exit polling data and other evidence of voter preferences (2006, p. 149).[2]

Fiorina and colleagues argue that the idea of a culture war does not stem from heated interactions between everyday Americans, but rather is the result of clashing elites in the political class reported on by the media (2006, pp. 166–167). The real divisions were between "the political class" – that is, "the collection of officeholders, party and issue activists, interest group leaders, and political info-tainers who constitute the public face of politics in contemporary America," for whom, as the authors claim, "[t]here is no question" of polarization (2006, p. 16) – and everyone else.

Who is in the "political class"? People who are very interested in and knowledgeable about political issues – more so than the general public; they have more extreme views and are less interested in compromise than members of the general public; they care about issues that concern small groups more than the larger population – hot button issues that get a lot of press, such as gay marriage; and they act in a manner that is "loud, disrespectful, vituperative – in a word, uncivil" (Fiorina, 2006). "Clearly," as Fiorina and Abrams argued in 2009, "the citizenry as a whole is much less deeply divided between liberals and conservatives than are political elites, and any evidence of increased polarization lies somewhere between nonexistent and slight" (Fiorina & Abrams, 2009, p. 12).

Fiorina and his team assign responsibility for the culture war phenomenon to party activists fighting tooth and nail and to the mass media reporting on their

activities to fill airtime, refresh web page content, and take up newspaper inches. The party elites of today are different from the ones in the past, they argue:

> the inaccurate picture of national polarization presented by the media undoubtedly reflects the fact that the thin stratum of elected officials, political professionals, and party and issue activists who talk to the media are better sorted now than a generation ago. They are more distinct, more ideological, and more polarized than their predecessors. (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 66)

The polarization controversy represents "mostly wishful thinking and useful fund-raising strategies on the part of culture war guerrillas, abetted by a media driven by the need to make the dull and everyday appear exciting and unprecedented" (2006, p. 77).

The media, the authors argue, have it backwards: instead of deducing from objective information that America has been polarized, "the media often reverse the process, selecting unusual but colorful examples to fit the prior conclusion that the country is deeply split" (2006, p. 25). This point of view has some validity, according to former *USA Today* White House correspondent Richard Benedetto. In 1993, following Bush's loss to Clinton, moderate outgoing Republican National Committee (RNC) chairman Rich Bond, in his farewell speech, made controversial remarks about the future of the abortion plank in the Republican Party platform. Rushing to call the story in, Benedetto overheard the following remark made by a CNN producer calling in to work at the phone next to him: "Find me the biggest anti-abortion bomb-thrower you can find!"[3] The idea, Benedetto suggests, was to set up someone on the extreme right and stir up a fight, which has the consequence of generating the perception that opinion on the issue was divided between two irreconcilable positions. Very few Americans fall into the "bomb-thrower" category on any issue, yet such flamboyant and extreme advocates get a lot of air time on network and cable news and information programs.

Agenda Setting

Benedetto's anecdote brings into sharp focus the power held by the mass media to *set the agenda* in the USA. They may do so in two keys ways: first, they can affect the level of importance assigned to a news item by the public through how the information is presented. The media may emphasize a print story's importance by placing it in an "above the fold" front-page headline or, conversely, they may bury it in the back of the newspaper (Graber, 2006, p. 194). Television media may lead off a news broadcast with a story that seems particularly important (Graber, 2006, pp. 194–195), or they may mention it in passing, as the closing credits roll. Second – and even more importantly – the mass media decide what *is* news in the first place, and therefore what people will talk about.

The mass media understand that, in order to attract an audience, they need to grab the reader's or viewer's attention somehow. In a world increasingly cluttered with media options – 24-hour cable channels, talk radio, the Internet, iPods, iPhones, and so on – media outlets are more desperate than ever to find ways to stand out from the crowd. Although many may argue that the media have a responsibility to be objective (see Benedetto interview), the media's *news values* reflect the for-profit reality. Thus the three key news values that guide how the media make decisions regarding newsworthiness are novelty, negativity, and conflict (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 22). In other words, how unusual is the story? Does the story show that all is *not* well in the world? Does it feature two competing and compelling sides facing each other? In order to merit the notice of a fickle public, stories must meet at least one of these criteria. A classic example of how media play up polarization is what occurred in 2004, when the *Washington Post* featured "red versus blue" America stories highlighting differences between residents of states on the respective sides.[4]

Conflict is a particularly strong selling point for political stories on television. As Fiorina writes: "Television does not cover the tens of millions of ordinary Americans who are busy earning their livings and raising their families; rather, television covers the charges and countercharges of the political class" (Fiorina, 2006). Philip Klinkner agrees, finding that "conflict sells, especially juicy sorts of cultural conflict, making the media more likely to focus on political division than consensus" (Klinkner, 2004). Richard Benedetto concurs, arguing that "every story has to be a strong conflict. Without it, in newsrooms today, the story is 'boring'" (Benedetto interview).

Conflict often requires extreme positions – after all, if compromise is possible, why bother pointing out the differences? Not surprisingly, the loudest voices in each political party are often the most extreme ones as well; moderate voices either have disappeared or have largely been ignored (Benedetto interview). A generation ago, Stephen Hess examined the selection of US senators as guests on leading political discussion programs, particularly the Sunday morning shows known for quality discussions. He found that those selected for appearances tended to be serious institutional players in Congress, not the aggressive ideologues or media hounds (see Hess, 1986). But since that study the media environment has changed dramatically. The best known political discussion programs on television are often hosted by ideological figures who value guests who are controversial, colorful, and have an ideological edge themselves. Even stodgy old Sunday morning talk shows such as *Meet the Press* have begun to emulate some of the ratings-attracting techniques of the newer and edgier programs by presenting controversial guests or by tweaking important newsmakers with "gotcha" questions intended to make them uncomfortable or to generate some heated discussions.

The "old school" news programs have been joined by new "pseudo-news" programs – "anchored" by skillful political info-tainers such as Fox News's Bill O'Reilly – that have perfected the art of presenting extreme views as representative of the country as a whole. Much of the public may be annoyed by having mostly

extreme views as options, but, as pointed out by O'Reilly, annoying audience members in this manner works (Mutz, 2006, p. 243). Even an annoyed viewer is engaged with what he or she is seeing, which is, quite frankly, the whole point. Thus, one defense of the often overheated political discussion programs is that they do at least attract an audience and get people to think about political issues. If every such show emulated the "PBS NewsHour" and very few people watched, would the networks be performing any public service at all?

News or Opinion?

Even while viewers are glued to their televisions or newspapers, exactly what they are watching or reading has become less clear, as lines between news analysis and news reporting have been blurred. Newspapers don't flag "analysis" as much as they used to. Reporters analyze right in the story, without pointing out that they are editorializing (Benedetto interview). The latest version is opinion shows presented as news. Bill O'Reilly's *The O'Reilly Factor*, Chris Matthews's *Hardball*, and Rush Limbaugh's radio program, to name just a few, are not news programs – they are entertainment shows featuring entertainers using the news for entertainment purposes (Benedetto interview).

The consequences of this shift are monumental. As Hetherington and Oppenheimer point out,

> Political commentators, especially on cable news and talk radio, reinforce [elite-level polarization]. For every Hannity, there is a Colmes. For every Limbaugh and O'Reilly, a Franken and an Olbermann. Commentators on the right and left have produced increasingly vitriolic critiques of their opponents (a very incomplete list includes Amann & Breuer, 2006; Coulter, 2006; Hannity, 2004; Franken, 1996). In short, elected leaders, activists, and the news media generate a lot of angry sniping. (Hetherington & Oppenheimer, 2008, p. 2)[5]

From one perspective, such sniping debases the public discourse. It also fuels a sense of hopelessness about the possibility of solving any problems, because the formulaic discussion programs that often feature a sniping conservative against a sniping liberal generate the perception that, for every issue, there are two opposing camps that cannot compromise or work together reasonably. The goal of each side seems total victory and the surrender of its opposition.

Thomas Rosensteil offers an alternative view of these media personalities. He maintains that they are helping people to manage and make some sense of the overwhelming amount of political information available to the public.

> In the minds of their audiences, Limbaugh, O'Reilly, Franken, and even, in a less direct way, comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, are offering knowledge creation. They are helping people put things in place. They are helping people know how to feel and think about issues. People have, or think they have, enough

> information. What they want is for someone to help them clarify matters, to feel more sure of things. The O'Reilly or Limbaugh style of presentation itself is less polarizing (in the direct sense of staging an argument) than it is analytical or interpretive. (Rosenstiel, 2006, pp. 253–254)

Rosensteil is correct that much of the public looks to these media personalities to provide guidance about political matters and that, although often overheated, their presentations offer some useful analysis. But it is difficult not to recognize the appearance of polarization created by this steady drumbeat of commentary by media personalities who are paid to be entertaining and provocative and in many cases to present strongly ideological viewpoints.

The "Either/Or" Frame

Perhaps the formulation of issues by the political info-tainment talk shows suits us because, in many ways, we seem to live in an "either/or" society that favors one winner and one loser. American government is set up for winner-take-all elections in single member districts. We have two major political parties and two leading ideologies. It might be that, as the *Washington Post*'s E. J. Dionne, Jr. has argued,

> the false choices posed by liberalism and conservatism make it extremely difficult for the perfectly obvious preferences of the American people to express themselves in our politics. We are encouraging an "either/or" politics based on ideological preconceptions rather than a 'both/and' politics based on ideas that broadly unite us.

What is more, by "putting such a premium on false choices and artificial polarization, our electoral process is making it harder and harder for electoral winners to produce what they were elected for: good government" (Dionne, 1991, pp. 14–15).

How a story is framed can have serious consequences for the manner in which the public interprets it. The way a journalist chooses to *frame* a story is intended to "tell us what is important, what the range of acceptable debate on a topic is, and when an issue has been resolved" (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003, p. xiii). What is more, when constructing a narrative, journalists make editorial choices about language that can affect how the public sees the stakes in the story. For example, "intact dilation and extraction" has a different resonance with the public from "partial birth abortion" (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003, p. xiv). These two abortion-related phrases represent two starkly different, *either/or* views of exactly the same procedure.

Political issues are increasingly being framed by the mainstream news media as "either/or" choices. Television news stories in particular lose nuance and need to have winners and losers, and a compromise on legislation means that nobody wins or loses. So the media often focus on how the parties "sold out" (Benedetto interview).

The "either/or" tendency is exacerbated by political info-tainment "talking heads" who use uncivil language or try to frame a debate in the most stark terms. A case in point: Bill O'Reilly commented on gay marriage in 2006 as follows:

> The gay marriage issue is perhaps the most vivid example of the nature's [*sic*] culture war. Secular progressives like Ted Kennedy want a new America, one that *nurtures* everyone. One that caters to the individual needs and wants. Traditionalists like me believe the USA has become strong because of its core values: freedom, individual responsibility and institutions like traditional marriage, which foster common goals. (O'Reilly, 2006)

In four sentences, O'Reilly has laid down boundary lines that divide America into two warring factions not over merely gay marriage, but also regarding what "America" really represents!

These divisive arguments are exacerbated by television producers who favor tight camera shots, creating the impression that these agitated people are "quite literally … in your face" (Mutz, 2007, p. 623). Does this mean that dueling "talking heads" may be making viewers more hostile? We do not know if incivility has increased, but "the increased *visibility* of uncivil conflicts on television seems indisputable" (Mutz, 2006, p. 244). Another consequence of this uncomfortable closeness is that political shows may "damage the notion of a 'worthy opposition,' " because feeling too close to the other side increases dislike and makes compromise more difficult (Mutz, 2007, p. 633). Given the mass media's agenda-setting ability, the "either/or" nature of the culture war frame is consistent with the news values mentioned earlier. Indeed "[d]isagreement, division, polarization, battles, and war make better copy than agreement, consensus, moderation, cooperation, and peace" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 3).

The Evolving Media Marketplace

If the mass media (the television media, at least) are playing up differences in order to earn audience attention, as Benedetto suggests, what are the motivating factors that drive media outlets to behave in this manner? The current media marketplace is in a state of transition. As we move from print to electronic media, newspaper circulation is in a downward spiral. The major television networks are also hemorrhaging audience share. Younger media consumers turn increasingly to computers for entertainment, particularly to social networking web sites such as Facebook. Many use their iPods, iPhones, and other devices to tune out the rest of the world.

At the same time, the pressure for news shows to make a profit is greater than ever. Since the 1970s, the success of television newsmagazine *60 Minutes* has raised profit expectations for TV journalism (Fallows, 1997, p. 55). In pursuit of advertising revenue, television has adjusted accordingly by seeking out controversial speakers

to discuss and analyze news topics on air. One way to grab viewers is to feature elites discussing controversial topics.

Another way to attract an audience is to feature controversial guests, who then provide a template for others wishing to earn media time:

> People with deep issue commitments who express them in loud chants and strident rhetoric provide good footage and copy. The smallest demonstration will attract a camera crew and give a spokesperson or two the opportunity to provide a colorful quotation or sound bite. Seeing the success of fellow purists in getting recognition by the media, others no doubt were encouraged to follow a similar path. (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 191)

The use of attention-getting tactics by extremist groups – whose views are amplified by reporters turning to them for quotations and for their views – has made matters worse (Benedetto interview).

Elite Journalists Have Changed

Even as the media marketplace has evolved, so too have the top journalists who write the newspaper stories and read the television scripts. Today's media "play the game," which means that they exacerbate differences in order to sell newspapers and advertising space (Benedetto interview). Richard Benedetto always kept his newspaper's audience in mind: "I'd ask myself, what do my friends in Utica (NY) need to know?" (Benedetto interview). In contrast, he suggests, "Washington journalists report for our friends in the media – not by providing explanations, but by amplifying trivia" (Benedetto interview). "Trivia" include the "horse race" coverage of which candidate is winning the race. This coverage is most crucial early in a race, when the candidate's actual performance can make or break his or her campaign, depending on what the media establish as expectations (Ansolabehere, Behr, & Iyengar, 1993, p. 60).

Aside from what journalists do, their very sense of identity has changed. Whereas most journalists used to be born and raised in a community, to live and work there for years, and to have a stake in what they wrote, their modern counterparts usually go to a small community with aspirations to leave and climb the ladder until they accumulate enough experience to go to New York or Washington, DC (Benedetto interview). Or they may cover local politics for a large urban publication, biding their time while a more prestigious beat awaits them.

In this climb to the top, the danger is that many leading journalists become out of touch. Author James Fallows (1997) posits that reporters for prestigious papers such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* spent so much time talking to political elites that they eventually lost touch with their readers. A case in point: shortly after President George H. W. Bush decided to bomb Iraq, a *New York Times* reporter commented aloud on a story in his newspaper that 80 percent

of the people surveyed supported the air strikes: "I don't know one!" (Benedetto interview). The key stories by elite print journalists are picked up and further developed by the networks, perpetuating the sense of disconnection from mainstream America.

Senior White House correspondent Kenneth Walsh confirms the view that elite reporters have gotten out of touch with ordinary Americans:

> We White House journalists no longer live like average Americans. We make more money than they do. We live in a world where national politics and government are the dominant themes in our lives, which is not true anywhere else in the country. We often eat at fancy restaurants on expense accounts. We visit exotic places … We stay at luxury hotels … we tend to define people and events in terms of how they affect our small world. (Walsh, 1996, pp. 291–292)

Fiorina and colleagues agree: Most journalists covering national political events, who live in "the politicized salons of Washington, New York and Los Angeles," do not mingle much with "normal people." Rather they "spend most of their time talking to members of the political class and to each other" (Fiorina et al, 2006, p. 21). Perception becomes reality after a time (pp. 5–6).

What difference does it make what these high-level folks think about politics? According to media scholar Doris Graber, "[t]he average individual, despite contrary democratic fictions, is fairly unimportant in the political process. Mass media impact on a handful of political decision makers usually is vastly more significant because it influences how they conduct political affairs" (Graber, 2006, pp. 16–17). What is more, it creates an illusion of widespread division, according to Fiorina and his team: "A polarized political class makes the citizenry appear polarized, but it is largely that – an appearance" (Fiorina et al., 2006, p. 9). "Thus," they suggest, "journalists tend to be greatly over-exposed to a slice of America that is not at all representative. The political class that journalists talk to and observe is polarized, but the people who comprise it are not typical" (p. 22). The authors conclude: "since the media are part of the political class and talk mostly to and about the political class, the myth of popular polarization took root and grew" (p. 167).

James Fallows maintains that the attitudes of leading journalists have also changed significantly. In the days before "celebrity journalism," reporters were a part of the working class and they identified with the issues that affected their communities. But a profound change occurred after Watergate, when reporters began to see that uncovering scandal or the next big story was the key to achieving some kind of celebrity and making a lot of money (see Fallows, 1997, pp. 129–181). News reporters became more confrontational and, afraid to miss the next Watergate, they pushed hard to uncover wrongdoing, or even to play a role themselves in generating controversy that could make a big story (Fallows, 1997, pp. 132, 178).

Another issue is how now the lines between political and media elites are blurrier than ever. Although Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy had close relationships with some journalists, it's now "a whole cottage industry"

in Washington, DC (Benedetto interview). What is more, today few eyebrows are raised when a former political campaign operative accepts a visible media position. The print media may make a former political operative into an op-ed columnist, but television goes even further (Benedetto interview). Former Clinton communications director and campaign operative George Stephanopoulos anchors ABC News's *This Week*. The late Tim Russert, who was a former counselor to New York governor Mario Cuomo and a chief of staff to late senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), served as anchor of *Meet the Press*. And some in the media gravitate to government. Just to cite one of many contemporary examples, Jay Carney left *Time* magazine to serve as Vice President Joe Biden's director of communications and eventually became President Barack Obama's presidential press secretary. The movement of many people between journalism and government reinforces common perspectives about politics, which are often vastly at odds with broader public sentiments.

Conclusion: Are the Media Contributing to Polarization?

Whereas scholars do not see a clear-cut answer to the question of whether the country is deeply polarized, the media have answered that question in the affirmative. Mass media in their various forms, including political news and commentary, have thus contributed significantly to the public's sense that the USA today is ideologically divided. "Red versus blue America" is such a common formulation now that few question its validity.

Does it matter, though, that the media identify and then amplify political polarization? Certainly media portrayals of the country's political situation and the ideological edginess of much reporting and commentary have real consequences. Many Americans no longer perceive the media as independent-minded enterprises working on behalf of the public interest, but rather as just additional politically minded entities, out to serve their own interests. Public esteem for the media has dropped substantially in the past generation. Richard Posner assigns responsibility for the public's lack of trust in the media to polarization, and he suggests that, "[a]s media companies are pushed closer to one end of the political spectrum or the other, the trust placed in them erodes. Their motives are assumed to be political" (Posner, 2005).

In a study of conservative talk radio, David Jones argues that, as the media fragment and more options become available to partisan sources of political information, the consequences may be even more polarized opinions (Jones, 2002). Markus Prior suggests that more media options add to polarization because less politically interested people are no longer captives of network news – they will watch entertainment channels and are less likely to participate, leaving more politically active/partisan voters to decide who wins elections (see Prior, 2007). The media thus perpetuate polarization, or at least the perception of its existence, by taking the opportunity to stand out whenever possible. Although CNN evolved from *Crossfire* to *Ballot Bowl*, it wasn't so much a step forward as it was a step to the side.

There isn't much evidence that the media will any time soon downplay conflict and controversy – what suits the entertainment and business values of the media is what plays. But the same forces that help perpetuate the hyper-competitive atmosphere that pushes the media toward conflict and controversy are also ones that offer some alternatives for news consumers who want something more. Although most competitors seek to stand out from the crowd by being edgy or starkly ideological, the proliferation of media options also means that there is a lot of high-quality news information and analysis available. Perhaps it is wishful thinking to hope that one day the public will tire of the formulaic and often bombastic programming that passes for news and analysis these days, and that news consumers will turn to the better-quality sources of information. But, more realistically, the better-known media will continue to do what works for them and thus further the perception of a divided and conflict-ridden electorate.

Notes

1 In 2004 red-state voters supported always legal abortion by 32 percent to blue-state voters' 44 percent; and red-state voters supported gay marriage 31 percent to 39 percent in blue states.
2 Although it is correct that many in the media overplayed the role of moral issues in the 2004 presidential election outcome, that is not to say that these issues were merely minor influences. Indeed the 11 states that held anti-gay marriage referenda had about a 2.4 percent higher turnout rate than the other 39 states, and overwhelming opposition to these referenda aided Bush's re-election in such key states as Ohio. See Rozell & Gupta, 2006, pp. 11–21.
3 Interview with Richard Benedetto conducted by Jeffrey Crouch on May 28, 2008, in Washington, DC.
4 For the first in a three-article series entitled "America in Red and Blue: A Nation Divided," see Von Drehle, 2004.
5 Since Hetherington and Oppenheimer penned this analysis, Alan Colmes has left Fox TV, Keith Olbermann is no longer on MSNBC, and Al Franken became a US senator. In opinion media, the conservative stalwarts have had the greatest staying power.

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17

The Social-Cultural Construction of News
From Doing Work to Making Meanings

Daniel A. Berkowitz and Zhengjia Liu

We begin our discussion of "the social construction of news" by de-emphasizing the *social* aspect of news construction and focusing instead on the *cultural* dimensions. This is a crucial distinction. Past literature on social construction of news has largely emphasized how news is shaped by life in the news organization and by the work strategies deployed there to meet deadlines and quality expectations. In other words, a "social construction of news" approach depicts news as the result of constraints on news – interactions in the newsroom, relationships with the news organization's sources of information, working conventions of the news profession – all embedded in the news institution and in a society's press system (Berkowitz, 1997; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

In all, a conventional *social construction* of news approach debates the potential for accurately representing reality against the unavoidable bias emerging from working relationships, while the possibility of representing reality is an implicit hope residing at the foundation of this approach. A *cultural construction* of news approach, in contrast, departs from concerns about truth and bias to consider meanings that grow both from the culture of journalism and from the society in which the journalism is embedded. This perspective has long been implied by research in the social construction of news, but it has never really been stated directly. Research in the last decade or so has begun to bring cultural meanings to the forefront, showing how the work of journalists is not meaning-neutral, while also acknowledging that humans are essentially creatures engaged in meaning making and meaning interpretation, which in turn comes from the cultures of a number of different social worlds at several levels of analysis. In that conversation, questions about attaining objectivity become mundane.

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This chapter thus begins by sketching out the essentials of research about the social construction of news. It then shifts to consider ways in which news is constructed from the cultural meanings of a society; this includes news as mythical narrative, news as collective memory, and news as ideograph. Finally, it brings the conversation together to argue for a cultural construction of news.

The Social Construction of News: Constraints and Relationships

As far back as David Manning White's (1950) study of the cantankerous gatekeeper Mr. Gates, research has explored the possibility that news might be constructed through social arrangements leading to bias. White argued that observing and interviewing Mr. Gates revealed "how highly subjective, how reliant upon value-judgments based on the 'gate keeper's' own set of experiences the communication of 'news' really is." Gates offered rationales for his story selections such as "too red," "BS," "propaganda," and "Don't care for suicides." Just over 40 years later, Bleske (1991) studied a younger female editor at a different newspaper and found that, although the conditions were quite different, the character of the news mix was much the same. Berkowitz (1990) asked much the same questions while studying local television news and found that the news staff juggled audience expectations, working resources, and the general format of a newscast to guide decisions. Further, although the gatekeeping process was initially conceptualized as an individual effort, this study in the television context found a group process in play. Given these and other studies, White's initial conclusions now seem rather superficial, as higher levels of social forces are believed to carry much more weight. Even at the organizational level, much greater social forces influence the news. Breed (1955), for example, portrayed a news organization as a place where journalists learn rules to conform to in order to avoid criticism and censure. Social forces also come from a news organization's working ties to the broader world. For example, Donohue, Olien, and Tichenor (1989) found that community advertisers' expectations were factored into news decisions alongside professional beliefs and beliefs of members of the news organization.

Shifting vantage points in assessing the news

More essentially, the larger exploration in this vein pits what could be called a *journalistic vantage point* against a *sociological vantage point*. The journalistic vantage point can be considered as normative. That is, it applies tenets of a professional belief system – an ideology – against a commonly accepted set of standards that focus on the "mission" of the journalist as standard-bearer for a Fourth Estate that protects society from corruption in government and business. Thus, from the journalistic vantage point, questions about news tend to center around possible bias in reporting on stories that are missed or misreported and on

other elements that might lead to less than a full and accurate truth. In all, the journalistic vantage point focuses on how well a media organization meets its role in society (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956).

The chief weakness of this journalistic vantage point, then, is its emphasis on *judging* how journalism has dealt with issues, texts, and actions; missing here is an understanding of news as a human phenomenon. Thus this vantage point depicts a news article as a good story or a bad story, and the article's writer can be labeled "a good journalist" if the narrative being told is seen by other journalists as "right" (curiously, the alternative label tends to be "not a good journalist" rather than "a bad journalist."). This critique rests on the unspoken belief that news can ideally represent the real world, offering an accurate picture of what is really out there. From the journalistic vantage point, it is possible for a news story to *not* be a social construction; for if would be considered "bad" if a story were deemed as an obvious construction (Berkowitz, 2011).

Contrary to this position is what could be called the *sociological vantage point*, which suggests that news is indeed a construction growing from the social arrangements that shape a journalist's work: to be a journalist is to engage in strategic activity learned on the job. From this perspective, news is constructed by workers who unavoidably put a bit of themselves, their organization, their profession, and their society into what they produce, and each one of these factors imposes some sort of limit or constraint (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). As they do their jobs, these news workers interface with others in their organization, learning norms for making their product and receiving criticism or praise for what they have done. Soloski (1989) argued that, just by itself, journalists' self-conception as professionals constrained journalists to follow organizational expectations. In an organization resources are limited in terms of staff and equipment; production demands related to deadlines, space, time, and competition further dictate how news turns out (Berkowitz, 1990). Tuchman (1973) thus portrayed news as a "strategic ritual" geared to structuring the flow of work to meet product expectations and deadlines. Bantz, McCorkle, and Baade (1980) depicted a news organization as a factory that employed a routine production process for gathering and assembling materials into a finished product. In this metaphorical factory workers trained in one location can quickly be interchanged with ones from another location. And, as news is gathered and manufactured, its end result is shaped by unspoken expectations about which meanings are acceptable within the profession and within the society (Berkowitz & TerKeurst, 1999). All of this ends up being packaged within the tacitly accepted meanings of the culture of journalism and of the culture of the society to which the former belongs; yet the position is inherently sociological in worldview.

The sociological vantage point surfaced most clearly in the late 1960s, when sociologists (e.g., Altheide, 1976; Epstein, 1973; Fishman, 1982; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Molotch & Lester, 1974; Tuchman, 1973) began studying journalism from the perspective of the accomplishment of work: journalists make a product agreed to be "good" within a conventional time frame and allocation of

resources (mainly staff and equipment). Epstein (1973) depicted the nature of life in an organization and presented it as a key to news. Fishman (1982) described how journalists normalized bureaucratic proceedings by reporting them the way they are "supposed" to go rather than the way they actually went. Molotch and Lester (1974) revealed how the sources that journalists go to for information greatly influence what journalists are able to do. This perspective views journalists as similar to other workers who face expectations from their organizations and regularly develop strategies that allow them to accomplish their work in a predictable way. Even journalistic work related to highly unexpected events, what has been called a "what-a-story" (Tuchman, 1973), has been found to be highly strategic and routine, a form of storytelling that journalists revere. Berkowitz (1992, 2000) found that journalists were able to anticipate how to cover a plane crash or a celebrity death by typifying story lines and actors, plugging in details from the current occurrence into the generic story structure. That is, although the sociological vantage point draws on the culture of the profession, culture is not seen as the driving force that constructs the meanings of news. The sociological vantage point, however, goes well beyond the journalistic perspective, placing journalism as one kind of scheduling-related work among others – such as social services, medical care, or even car repair.

Because the backgrounds and theories of these researchers tended to be based in sociology rather than in the discipline they were studying – journalism, the researchers themselves were not intellectually bound by the professional ideology of journalism (Berkowitz, 2011; Reese, 1990). To somebody thinking from the journalistic vantage point, this basic fact becomes dissonant with the sociological assumption that news production is constructed: journalists are supposed to have a higher societal mission than workers in factories or service industries – making news is distinct from making spaghetti or cookies. And yet removing the lens of professional ideology in order to examine journalism like any other work provides the opportunity for a re-examination and re-interpretation of how news is made and of what it represents.

Studies in this sociological vein depict journalists in a struggle between the ideals of journalism and the tensions created at their workplace, a struggle that is further tempered by the behavioral norms and ethics of the profession at large (Ettema, Whitney, & Wackman, 1987). Key to this picture are the working arrangements and the constraints they impose on a journalist's ability to fulfill his or her professional ideals, the ultimate argument being that this clash leads not to an approximation of reality, but instead to a *constructed* reality. In a way, this picture was more about the *shape* and *rhythms* of journalistic work than about the *meanings* emerging from that work. Tuchman (1973), for example, found that, rather than planning news coverage according to categories such as hard news, soft news, spot news, developing news, and continuing news, journalists actually typified news categories in relation to how journalistic work would be accomplished. Likewise, Eliasoph (1988) argued that the ideology of an organization – the meanings of its culture – had more to do with the meanings of the news that

was produced than with the routines employed to accomplish that journalistic work. Beyond the newsroom, reporters with a long standing on the same beat – science, for example – collaborate as they work to make sure that colleagues are seen as successful by their organizations, sharing the same story elements despite producing individual works (Dunwoody, 1978).

Along the way, it became clear that life and work in the news organization and in the journalistic profession subsume many of the differences that individuals could accomplish (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Even the economics of a media market impose clear limits on the amount of work that can be deployed in reporting on a story (McManus, 1994). Within specific news organizations, the hope for scooping the competition brings a news staff together to produce a somewhat different kind of news, that possesses both peer praise and audience appeal (Ehrlich, 1995). For example, a study drawing on the sociological vantage point might look at the unspoken rules in the newsroom and at how new reporters learn them, a notion that has been carried forth since the earliest sociological studies (Breed, 1955; Soloski, 1989). Or a study could explore the strategies that reporters use to gather information for news stories and what they do to ensure their stories will be done by deadline with the appropriate level of quality (Compton & Benedetti, 2010). Yet another direction considers how the ongoing relationship between journalists and their sources of information impacts the raw materials from which news can be constructed (Reich, 2009; Schudson, 2011; Sigal, 1973; Tunstall, 1976).

The sociological vantage point also acknowledges the impact of *levels of analysis* in shaping social constructions of news (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This concept can be defined as the social aggregation where a social force is located. An *individual level* of analysis, for example, places social construction in a cognitive plane, where schemata, scripts, and other cognitive shortcutting strategies lead the way – in other words, the construction takes place in the journalist's mind, from life-experience schemata (Stocking & Gross, 1989). It is important to note that, although this level might appear similar to the journalistic vantage point, a key difference is its emphasis on *process* rather than on normative judgment after a news story has been disseminated. Thus, a *small group* level of analysis highlights the importance of ongoing daily interactions in a journalistic workplace, where shared experiences among colleagues build a group (North, 2009). Likewise, an *organizational level* of analysis would consider the hierarchies of workers and managers, as well as the constraints coming from the organization's limited resources and production expectations (Grunwald & Rupar, 2009). An *institutional level* of analysis would go beyond a single organization, to explore the pressures from aspects such as press system, inter-media competition, and the standards that the institution has implicitly set for itself (Allern & Blach-Orsten, 2011). A similar level of analysis could be called the *professional level*, where the boundaries of appropriate behaviors and actions would put journalists under both constraint and judgment from their peers at large (Dickinson, 2012; Koljonen, Raittila, & Valiverronen, 2011).

At each of these levels, work can be seen as ritualistic, specific activities carrying meaning to the everyday life of journalism, although not to the news itself. For example, when an organization comes together to cover a major disaster, the journalistic culture engages in something akin to a battle or a sporting event (Berkowitz, 2000). Each day's work is measured as success or failure against itself and against its competition. Another example appears when a journalist or a journalistic organization crosses the boundaries of acceptable ethical behavior: then members of the institution begin a ritual to exorcise the violator(s) while exonerating the institution and its accepted practices – what has been called "paradigm repair" (Berkowitz, 2000).

Throughout this discussion so far, the emphasis has been on how constructions may take place that bring news away from truth and reality, but there is little that addresses how specific meanings become embedded in these constructions. Instead, the sociological perspective clearly highlights how the nature of journalistic work and the expediencies that journalists face limit journalists' abilities to gather "real reality," if it were possible for such a thing to be known. To focus more on the meanings emerging from news constructions, we turn to three threads of research that deal specifically with the cultural construction of meanings: news as mythical narrative, news as collective memory, and news as ideograph.

The Cultural Construction of News: Assembling Shared Meanings

Approaches to the study of news that center on cultural constructions have one thing in common: they argue that to report and write news is not just a strategic activity, but a process that re-uses meanings already present in the culture of journalism and in the culture of society. That is, to produce news is to retell events in a way that resonates with a society's existing values and meanings (Ettema, 2010). To turn an old saying on its head, history is a rough draft of the news (Berkowitz, 2011).

Constructing meanings through mythical narratives

One way that journalists culturally construct meaning is to cast an event into the form of a familiar mythical narrative. By myth, we do not mean *falsehood*, but rather a story that contains predictable plots, recognizable characters, broadly held values and culturally accepted morals (Lule, 2001). Because mythical narratives are so culturally familiar, journalists often do not even realize they are redeploying these stories. Yet mythical narratives serve as useful guides for story construction, even if journalists unconsciously need to force-fit some parts of an event into the familiar narrative by selectively adjusting actions and outcomes of an occurrence into a better match with the myth's template (Berkowitz & Nossek, 2001; Bird & Dardenne, 1988; Smith, 1997).

Using mythical narratives requires journalists to first identify an event as a good candidate for a mythical narrative. Lule (2001) describes seven archetypal master myths that comprise eternal stories from which news is woven. He offers the victim, the scapegoat, the hero, the good mother, the trickster, the otherworld, and the flood. Each of these myths contains the standard characters, the essential plotlines, and the core values of a culture. Yet there is no "official list" of narratives – this is one of those "know them when you see them" kinds of cultural elements. Bird (2005, p. 226) offers criticism of the master narratives approach, saying: "it pays scant attention to the differences in time and place that produce particular cultural moments and narratives." Her larger point is that journalists do not create myth on their own; they serve instead as "the brokers for the stories a culture is already telling" (2005, p. 227). In one study, American news about a terrorist attack in Israel retold America's Wild West story, while Israeli journalists instead cast the same occurrence as a narrative about the Holocaust (Nossek & Berkowitz, 2006). In each case, journalists told a narrative that was most culturally resonant for themselves, their colleagues, and their audiences.

Thus common mythical narratives are likely to vary somewhat according to the society, its culture, and its values, while some archetypal stories tend to be shared broadly. For example, many societies share some form of "hero" narrative – a story where a lone individual heads off on an arduous journey filled with self-sacrifice in order to right some crucial wrong or to protect society from some looming evil (Kitch & Hume, 2007). Exactly who is considered eligible for the hero designation, though, comes from the culture that retells the story. In addition, heroes can take a variety of forms of different magnitudes, from a fireman who rescues a small child from a burning building to a platoon of soldiers who secure a victory after a long-odds battle against a brutal attempt at conquest. At the Virginia Tech shootings, for example, the hero in news stories was a professor who survived the Holocaust only to die while protecting his students from an armed gunman on his otherwise placid campus (Berkowitz, 2010).

The importance of the adaptation of mythical narratives to the construction of news is that it helps make news look "culturally correct" while also streamlining a journalist's work efforts by providing a basic story line, story themes, and likely story characters. In other words, drawing on a mythical narrative helps news appear not as a construction but as "the way it is," with appropriate cultural values, story outcomes, and social actors – in essence, culture itself has created the news as the journalist becomes society's storytelling bard.

Constructing meanings through collective memory

Rather than telling news through a familiar storyline, collective memory helps define news and give it perspective and context. Essentially, as a journalist attempts to categorize an occurrence and begins crafting it as news, he or she scans through memory to find an approximate match for the story line or the character, so as to explain what it is "like." In essence, the past becomes a template for the future

(Zelizer, 2011). This does not suggest, however, that cultural memory of the past is accurate or correct, but simply that memory is widely agreed upon, so that the construction of news appears resonant and familiar. Most likely, then, memory is constructed and reconstructed through cultural values and ideology. For instance, in 2008, Barack Obama came to American voters as a young and inexperienced presidential candidate, an African American from a single-parent home who grew up in Hawai'i – he was somebody who didn't match the usual presidential mold. However, drawing on collective memory made Obama more tangible and familiar (Berkowitz & Raaii, 2010). In news of Obama's presidential campaign, reporters compared the campaign to that of Abraham Lincoln, Obama's public speaking ability and age to corresponding traits in John F. Kennedy, and the financial crisis facing the nation to that facing Franklin D. Roosevelt. By doing so, they could help the public imagine him as appropriately presidential. Once Obama was victorious in his presidential bid, news of his inauguration could go one step further: his story could be cast in the shadow of Martin Luther King. Likewise, when covering the news of the disintegration of the space shuttle Columbia on its re-entry in 2003, journalists drew on the collective memory of the 1986 space shuttle Challenger launch disaster to conduct interviews and craft stories, even though the two incidents involved vastly different circumstances (Edy & Daradanova, 2010).

In all, while the professional ideology of journalism argues that each occurrence is assessed and reported on its own, cultural collective memory suggests that the past serves as an essential guide for interpreting the present. This reference to the past is not necessarily applied by way of creating context for an emerging story, but rather as a means of comparison that helps shaping the meaning of a current occurrence within the realm of possible cultural meanings. Again, this approach goes beyond studying process as social construction and considers instead the cultural meanings that journalists draw upon in their work.

Constructing meanings through ideograph

On the surface, the words of any language carry meanings that can be agreed upon and inserted into a dictionary. At a deeper level, though, words can be seen as conveying a whole ideology. That is, some words or phrases mean much more than they appear to; in the jargon, such a word or phrase functions as an *ideograph*. The study of terrorism illustrates this concept. Everyday conversations about terrorism carry a shared meaning of the term; public officials apply it as if the phenomenon it designates were a natural fact. This observation stood out during a speech given by President George W. Bush in August 6, 2004 to the Unity Journalists of Color convention. In his talk, President Bush went off-script while referring to his usual label, "the global war on terror" (GWOT), explaining:

> We actually misnamed the war on terror. It ought to be the struggle against ideological extremists who do not believe in free societies who happen to use terror as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world. (SOURCEWATCH, 2008)

This degree of candor was rare in the ongoing campaign to win over political support. It also broke the carefully crafted illusion that war could be made on a *tactic* – terrorism – that would be viewed as natural, tangible, and real. Drawing on the simple GWOT label ends up skirting the political situations that lead to the use of terrorism as a tactic (Holbrooke, 2005). By changing a label, though, one brings the original label's legitimacy into question, as well as the political speech where it has been incorporated. Yet, for the Bush administration, to move from GWOT to SAIEWDNBIFSWHTUTAAWTTTSTCOTFW (Struggle Against Ideological Extremists, etc.) is to abandon any chance of offering a memorable, meaningful, ideologically loaded label (Milbank, 2004). This transition from a tangible act to an abstract issue likewise loses the power to persuade media audiences and to shape public opinion. In essence, dissecting the idea breaks up the shortcut and asks people to think about the elements that actually make up the ideograph; and then the power of the ideograph gets lost.

On the whole, reporting news about terrorism is a challenging job. Journalists write from a worldview they live each day; they are tempered by their professional efforts to remain detached from the subject of their reporting, the policies of their news organizations, and their interactions with colleagues, audiences, and news sources. As long as journalists continue to rely on the GWOT perspective, they share a predefined debate with their co-workers and their audience. To cast terrorism as SAIEWDNBIFSWHTUTAAWTTTSTCOTFW creates a tedious task for their audience, one that needs to be thought through and analyzed before sense making can begin. But the shared meaning of a simplified ideograph like "terrorism" helps shortcut interpretation and places the term into a conversation without those who take part in it pausing to question its ideological foundations.

This discussion about terrorism as an ideograph reviews one example alone. Other ideographs in common use are liberty, property, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and equality (see a discussion of one of these concepts in Wikipedia, for example). Each of these labels carries unquestionable meanings at first glance, yet in each case that meaning is ideological. Further, although an ideograph shapes the cultural construction of news, it would be reductionist to think of this construction from a media-centric perspective. Rather ideographs lie at the center of a society and are interactively shaped by popular culture, public officials, news media (broadly construed) and society overall. Likewise, ideographs shape meanings in each segment, so that the process becomes a two-way and dynamic one in which ideographic meanings shift like sand dunes over time.

This perspective is modeled in Figure 17.1. What is important to note in this model is that ideographs do not just lie at the center between officials, the public, and the news media, but are in a diamond-shaped relationship that incorporates meanings echoed by a myriad of popular culture forms such as film, television, fiction, social media, and blogs (to mention a few). Further, news media need to be construed broadly in this model, as the borders of news blur with those of popular culture forms. In a media-saturated environment, news comes from blogs, Facebook, the *Daily Show*, and talk show hosts ranging from Ellen DeGeneres

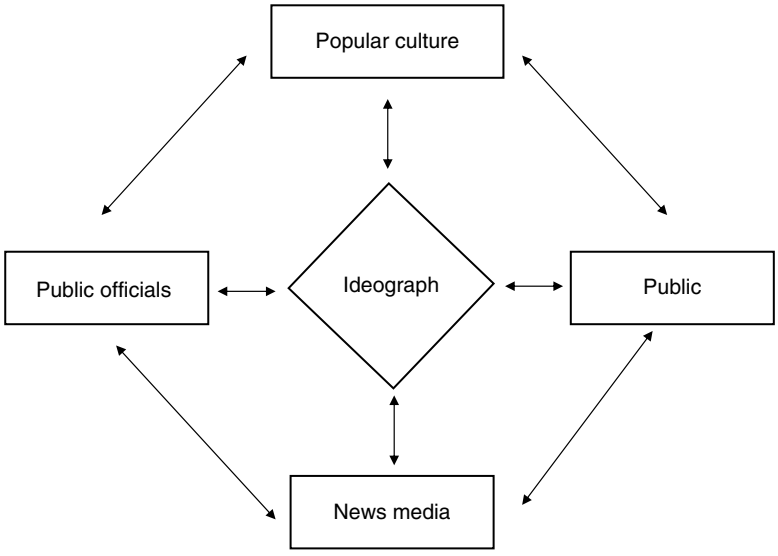

Figure 17.1 Modeling an ideograph in society.

to David Letterman to Jimmy Fallon. News talk programs blur with news as well, as pundits from the political left and right bandy about ideographs forming the center of their sparring. Thinking about Figure 17.1 more closely suggests that even focusing on a diamond-shaped set of interactions offers an overly sharp vision that is really much blurrier. Unlike news constructed from mythical narratives and collective memory, ideographs bring the potential for a wider sense of constructed cultural meanings over time, since they hinge on a single term or phrase rather than an overall cultural narrative.

Conclusion

This chapter began by highlighting the distinction between the *social construction of news* and the *cultural construction of news.* Each approach represents a different scholarly tradition, each of which departs from a journalistic answer to "What is news?" and "Why does news turn out like it does?" The sociological answer looks to the constraints and demands of life in a news organization, along with the strategies that journalists apply to come up with a timely product of appropriate quality. Looking at the cultural answer adds in one more question: "What does news tell us about the professional culture and the society that produces it?"

There is a central difference between these two vantage points. The sociological tradition appeared in the late 1960s and carried its thrust into the 1980s. This approach was largely furthered by sociologists who saw journalism as something akin to the working life of other organizations. The focus was therefore on how journalists interact and how their interactions shape what becomes news. The cultural

tradition (which began to gain visibility in the late 1980s and continues at the time of this writing) has taken three routes – meanings, ideology, globalism – that are related yet still distinct. The present chapter has focused on the essence of meanings and on how cultural meanings shape the news. It argues to explore journalists as story brokers of a culture and to understand journalism culture in the global context. It is this retelling of a culture's stories that places an emphasis on the cultural construction of news.

One key point lurks below the surface of this chapter's conversation. Much of the research in the social and cultural meanings of news has been based on traditional news media such as newspapers, television, radio, and magazines. Somewhat overlooked is the question of how content is constructed for blogs, tweets, Facebook posts, websites, and other emerging media forms. Like traditional news media, their content is a social and cultural construction; but, because a boundary exists between traditional journalists and these newer media forms, the latter's constructed nature has not received the same degree of attention and scrutiny (Berkowitz & Gutsche, 2012). On step further might be to explore how hybrid media such as interactive forums on news sites come to create constructions among their producer-consumers.

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18

Media, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere
History and Current Thinking

Robert S. Fortner, Ann Snesareva, and Ksenia Tsitovich

The transition from autocracy to democracy in the West was not an easy one. It involved revolutions, wars and conquests, and redefinitions of humanity as former slaves and peasants gradually left behind their chains, became crafts and trade people, developed a middle class, and took their places as citizens. Eventually it became possible for democracy to take hold and engage the majority of people as citizens. Even when this occurred, however, it took several decades to involve nonmajority people and women as full citizens.

As this process occurred, civil society took hold, and then a public sphere developed. ("Civil society" is a concept we owe to Antonio Gramsci.) As Thomas McCarthy put it in the "Introduction" to Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas, 1989, p. xviii),

> As a sphere between civil society and the state, in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed, the liberal public sphere took shape in the specific historical circumstances of a developing market economy. In its clash with the arcane and bureaucratic practices of the absolutist state, the emerging bourgeoisie gradually replaced a public sphere in which the ruler's power was merely represented *before* the people with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse *by* the people.

This process began perhaps in Medieval Europe, with the creation of guilds that merchants and craftsmen set up to assure quality in the goods they produced or sold (see Kieser, 1989). These guilds, however, had limited power, although they used their influence "to advance their own interests at their neighbors' expense" (Richardson, 2001, n.p.) Some of these guilds eventually developed into more formal structures, while others merely died away. Their interests were

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ultimately represented in business and trade associations, labor unions, or less formal collectivities.

In the eighteenth century the London and Sheffield Corresponding Societies were established and began to promote the idea of universal suffrage in England (Thompson, 1963, p. 17). The London Society was founded by only eight men, but six months later it claimed to have 2,000 members (p. 17). The societies promoted the reading of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* and frightened the conservative government of England with its claimed "Jacobin" ideas. The larger context was the fact that, in the previous 20 years, England had lost its American colonies and then observed the French Revolution across the English Channel (Thompson, 1963, p. 19).

> The London Corresponding Society has often been claimed as the first definitely working-class political organisation formed in Britain. Pedantry apart (the Sheffield, Derby and Manchester societies were formed before the Society in London) this judgement requires definition. On the one hand, debating societies in which working men took part existed sporadically in London from the time of the American War. On the other hand, it may be more accurate to think of the LCS as a "popular Radical" society than as "working class." (Thompson, 1963, p. 20)

As Asa Briggs put it, the eighteenth century in England brought about not only technical and economic change (Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776, just as England's industrial revolution was beginning), but also social and intellectual transformation:

> They were associated with a great increase in population, a further expansion of trade, the emergence of new social groups – both "captains of industry" and factory labour – the creation of new political pressures and new social institutions, new modes of thought and action, and, above all, the foundation of a new view of society. (Briggs, 1959, p. 20)

Like the London Corresponding Society, societies in other English cities, for example Birmingham and Manchester, began like local institutions – the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society and Birmingham's Lunar Society – "which stimulated intellectual, artistic, and scientific discussion (Briggs, 1959, p. 45). London's Royal Academy was founded in 1768 (p. 49).

The Clapham Sect

> did much to advertise the merits of "vital religion" as a substitute for a code of honour among the aristocracy and for prudential and rational Christianity among the middle classes. In 1787 they set up the Proclamation Society to advocate the reformed morality which Wilberforce had succeeded in persuading George III to sponsor in a Royal Proclamation of that year. The society, similar to the older and lapsed Society for the Reformation of Manners (founded in 1692) but far more influential, prepared the way for a whole series of Evangelical organizations of various kinds, during the course of the next fifty years. (Briggs, 1959, p. 72)

Briggs concluded: "The emergence of a new industrial middle class favoured the spread of the new morality which was taught in the Sunday schools" (p. 73).

Such associations, both secular and religious, were followed by a variety of other organizations, from labor unions to women's suffrage groups, anti-slavery societies, and trade and industrial associations from youth groups such as the Boy Scouts to the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations (YM and YWCAs). This large spectrum of nongovernmental and nonpolitical associations provided the organization of civil society; they offered places where people could discuss common interests and problems and seek solutions that might, in some cases, result in political activity. Their interventions into public life helped construct what Habermas came to call the "public sphere."

Despite criticisms raised against Habermas' analysis – especially for not paying heed to women and working men – he does deserve credit for illuminating an aspect of social development that was not widely recognized. He even admitted in the introduction to *Structural Transformations* that he was not dealing with the "plebian public sphere," which was represented in anarchist and chartist traditions, but indicated that even this portion of the total public sphere was "oriented toward the intentions of the bourgeois public sphere" (Habermas, 1989, p. xviii). So he did account for what he excluded, although in a highly truncated way.

Other scholars also indicate a clear distinction between the general populations of Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In that respect Habermas is not out of line in concentrating on the classes that had been created by the Industrial Revolution and constituted the bourgeoisie. Even shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, John Cowper Powys (2006) had referred to the people of England as a "herd." In 1874 Thomas Hardy (2005/1874) had famously referred to the tumult of the city as the locus of the "madding crowd." In Germany, writing in the 1930s, Karl Mannheim argued that man had passed through three historical stages (Mannheim, 1940, p. 68). At the time Habermas focused on, people were merely a horde. It was not until after 1830, E. J. Hobsbawm wrote, that the working class emerged "as an independent and self-conscious force in politics in Britain and France" and nationalist movements arose in "a great many European countries" (Hobsbawm, 1962, p. 140).

Part of the reason for the lack of attention to social development in the non-elite classes was the effort made by these elites to discredit or ignore this phenomenon. As Jonathan Rose has noted:

> Educated people commonly (though by no means universally) found something profoundly menacing in the efforts of working people to educate themselves and write for themselves. As [Matthew] Arnold predicted, culture was a force for equality and was destructive of ideology, including the ideology supporting the British class structure. That hierarchy rested on the presumption that the lower orders lacked the moral and mental equipment necessary to play a governing role in society. By discrediting that assumption, autodidacts demolished justifications of privilege. (Rose, 2001, pp. 20–21)

Like Mannheim, Habermas did attempt "to cope with modern Germany's authoritarian and totalitarian trajectory" (Salvatore, 2007, p. 4). This effort led him to examine the nonpolitical organizations and actors that, at some point, would have to endorse a particular political strategy for it to succeed – unless there was a putsch or coup that would manage to overthrow the old regime. This seems to have been an underlying motivation, too, for Karl Jaspers post-war lecture circuit in Germany to explain the "collective guilt" of the German people for the Holocaust at a time when it would have been more comforting to blame a few hard-core national socialists for the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime.

One of the most useful insights that Habermas had in the realm of theory is his indication (and implied criticism) that the bourgeois public sphere – a place of public debate on matters of common concern and completely separate from the exercise of power and authority by the state – was destroyed by the "intertwining of state and society in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (McCarthy, 1989, p. xii). This sphere was replaced by another, in which conflicting interests representing diverse constituencies competed, negotiated, and compromised among themselves and with government officials, but they excluded the public in the process. In this situation "the press and broadcast media serve less as organs of public information and debate than as technologies for managing consensus and promoting consumer culture" (p. xii), a rather tepid replacement for the robustness that Habermas detailed in the earlier incarnation.

The public sphere as a category (whether bourgeois, plebian, or other) existed within civil society (Habermas, 1989, p. 3). But the result of the change in character mentioned above also meant that public sphere decomposed. "Tendencies pointing to the collapse of the public sphere are unmistakable, for while its scope is expanding impressively, its function has become progressively insignificant" (p. 4). The critical thinking that had worked its way into the daily press after 1665 – a manner of thinking that had resulted in the creation of a "public" and had led this public to confront political authority through reason – had changed into a mere forum for vested interests, where divergent cases could be argued from positions of ideology or self-interest rather than from the standpoint of a group seeking consensus on what would best serve the people as a whole.

As capitalism developed from the thirteenth century on, spreading from northern Italy's city-states to Western and northern Europe, the interests of the bourgeoisie – especially its humanist inclusivism – were assimilated by the extant "noble courtly culture" (Habermas, 1989, p. 14).

> On the one hand this capitalism stabilized the power structure of a society organized in estates, and on the other hand it unleashed the very elements within which this power structure would one day dissolve. We are speaking of the elements of the new commercial relationships: the *traffic in commodities and news* created by early capitalist long-distance trade. (Habermas, 1989, p. 15)

News – the most germane of these two to the current essay – developed as a result of the merchants' need for "more frequent and more exact information about distant events" that might affect trade. So, "from the fourteenth century on, the traditional letter carrying by merchants … was organized into a kind of guild-based system of correspondence," which led to merchants organizing "the first mail routes, the so-called ordinary mail, departing on assigned days." Trade cities also became "centers for the traffic in news" (p. 16). This traffic in news, however, was not public but internal and proprietary, and thus it was no threat to the existing social order.

During the seventeenth century the private newsletter reports occasionally made their way into more public journals. As reports and the journals that carried them became more popular,

> certain categories of traditional "news" items from the repertoire of the broadsheets were also perpetuated – the miracle cures and thunderstorms, the murders, pestilences, and burnings. Thus, the information that became public was constituted of residual elements of what was actually available… (Habermas, 1989, p. 21)

News, attached to the needs of commerce, became a commodity, and the more copies of it could be sold publicly, the more profit could be made.

Habermas argues that state authorities also began to make use of the press for administrative purposes, and this was of "far greater import. Inasmuch as they made use of this instrument to promulgate instructions and ordinances, the addressees of the authorities' announcements genuinely became 'the public' in the proper sense" (p. 21). Newspapers then began to serve the "interests of the state administration" (p. 22; Habermas suggests that some coercion was employed). This came to include not only court announcements, but eventually commodity and stock market information as well, along with police proclamations and manufacturing announcements, gradually pushing the boundaries of this form of the public sphere outward. But, while such developments were theoretically aimed at all subjects within a political realm, including the "common man," in reality they reached mostly – if not exclusively – the "educated classes," which were the most interested in such activities (p. 22).

These educated classes developed into a "stratum of 'bourgeois' people" who

> occupied a central position within the "public." The officials of the rulers' administrations were its core – mostly jurists (at least on the continent …). Added to them were doctors, pastors, officers, professors, and "scholars," who were at the top of a hierarchy reaching down through schoolteachers and scribes to the "people." (Habermas, 1989, p. 23)

But

> [the] "burghers," the old occupational orders of craftsmen and shopkeepers, suffered downward social mobility; they lost their importance along with the very towns upon whose citizens' rights their status was based… Thus, the "capitalists,"

> the merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers … belonged to that group of the "bourgeois" who, like the new category of scholars, were not really "burghers" in the traditional sense. This streatum of "bourgeois" was the real carrier of the public, which from the outset was a reading public. (Habermas, 1989, p. 23)

This group of people was led by the state authorities and their mercantilist policies, Habermas argues, to acquire "an awareness of itself" as the opponent of the "court," and it began to constitute

> the now emerging *public sphere of civil society*. For the latter developed to the extent to which the public concern regarding the private sphere of civil society was no longer confined to the authorities but was considered by the subjects as one that was properly theirs. (Habermas, 1989, p. 23)

Such change did not always proceed smoothly. We have already come across Jonathan Rose's comment on the fears generated in the process (Rose, 2001, pp. 20–21, quoted above). In some respects Rose's claim reinforces Habermas' recognition of the developing civil society becoming conscious of itself without liege, but it also indicates the profound social transformation that such societies would have to tolerate, and then come to accept as a legitimate alternative to the traditions that had defined them for centuries.

This is perhaps enough detail from Habermas' analysis. Although here Habermas centered his scholarship on a particular set of places that are now largely gone (various revolutions ended the special status of the "court" in Europe), his basic approach to understanding what is necessary in order for civil society to function as a structure supportive of democracy – as well as his basic approach to understanding the foundational contribution of the media to this process (that is, their provision of the intelligence and information required for the adequate functioning of civil society in a democracy) – has been applied in a variety of contexts. These applications have been both critical – namely in relation to the "big man" or strong-arm tactics within authoritarian societies, especially in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Empire – and instructive – as various pro-democracy organizations and foundations (such as the Soros Foundation) have attempted to help establish civil society within newly created or liberated states. Thus has the theory become praxis.

Civil Society

Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi (1996) argues, for instance, that it was "nascent civil societies" in Africa that were at the forefront of dislodging "entrenched authoritarianism" on that continent.

> Although influences such as the fall of communism and pressure from foreign donors were important, it was often the resourcefulness, dedication, and tenacity of domestic civil society that initiated and sustained the process of transition.

> The opening of once-forbidden debate on new political directions; the decriminalization of dissent and acceptance (however grudging) of pluralistic politics; the convening of sovereign national conferences and constituent assemblies; preparations for competitive elections; and, in a significant number of cases, the eventual installation of elected governments – for all these things, civil societies can take a large share of credit. (Gyimah-Boadi, 1996, p. 118)

Also writing about Africa, John L. and Jean Comaroff (2000, p. 2) wonder how the "imprecise, unspecified idea" of civil society has "become the metaphor of the moment, standing in, here as elsewhere, for more coherent social visions, more commanding political ideologies?" After all, they claim, "earlier colonial evangelists" had "deemed the Dark Continent incapable of kindling bourgeois civility." But, they continue (2000, p. 3), "[i]n short, in Africa as in other places, 'civil society' evokes a polythetic clutch of signs. An all-purpose placeholder, it captures otherwise inchoate – as yet unnamed and unnameable – popular aspirations, moral concerns, sites and spaces of practice." But, having credited civil society with spearheading the changes in Africa's authoritarian "big man" states, the Comaroffs also approach the concept warily. Because "civil society" has no precise definition but seems "uncannily wide," they ask:

> what precisely does it, should it, include? Everything that occupies the space between the state and the individual, or the state and the household? Relations of production, family, and kinship? The market? Are religious organizations, the media, expressive culture, and the politics of consumption in or out? Does civil society exist as the antithesis of the state, in struggle with it, or as a condition of its possibility? Is it coterminous with, or distinct from, the public sphere? … Finally, how might all this be addressed in non-Western contexts, with their very different social histories and political cultures? (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000, p. 7)

A return to Habermas' original concept, set in its original context, would answer such questions easily – except for the issue of non-Western societies. But at this point that is undoubtedly irrelevant. The effort to pin down the phrase "civil society," the Comaroffs suggest, "seems rather beside the point." Instead, they say (2000, p. 8), "the key to its promise – its power as a sign that is as good to think and feel with as it is to act upon – lies in its very promiscuity, its polyvalence and protean incoherence." Although they admit that this reality might compromise its analytic capability, nevertheless its status provides "a tool of the social imagination … a cultural construct and an ideological trope." This, then, is its value in the African context.

Julie Hearn (2001, p. 43) agrees with the Comaroffs that the phrase "civil society" is imprecise, but she notes that three African countries – Ghana, South Africa, and Uganda – have attracted significant donor dollars to support its development. In these countries a "vocal, well-funded section" of civil society "intervenes on key issues of national development strategy" and "acts not as a force for challenging the *status quo*" – as happens in Antonio Gramsci's original

conception of the what "civil society" means, adds Hearn – "but for building societal consensus for maintaining it" (see also Edwards, 2009, p. 8).

Michael Bratton (1994, p. 1), although writing about Africa, does note that "the emergence of a democratic opposition to authoritarian socialist party-states in Central and Eastern Europe provided the impetus to the contemporary revival of civil society." Authoritarian regimes in Africa, he wrote, were undercut by the end of the Cold War and the subsequent reduction in support for African client states. And, he warns, that democratic change is not inevitable, despite the "prima facie evidence of a nascent civil society in certain African countries."

Gudrun Eisele's examination of "recent literature" on civil society in Europe led to this conclusion:

> Generally, the following elements are considered essential for civil society: Civil society is a sphere of societal self-organisation, opposed to the state. It addresses the public and aims at communicative action. Associations of civil society do not apply violence – at least not against living beings – to promote their causes as part of a certain minimal consensus on values. And the issues, causes and actions of civil society stand in relation with what is called the common weal or the res publica. (Eisele, 2005, p. 2)

She does admit, however, that different authors include or exclude certain agents as part of civil society or fail to distinguish it from other social actors, such as the market.

Eisele identifies civil society as having had

> a key role in the transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe. The term "civil society" was rediscovered and brought to life by dissidents and protest movements in countries of the former Eastern bloc which is one of the main reasons for its high ranking on the scientific agenda nowadays. (Eisele, 2005, p. 4)

But there is disagreement on this score. In particular, Marc Howard (2003, p. 16) writes that the "common elements of the communist experience and its enduring legacy" have resulted in common weaknesses in post-communist civil society. Such weaknesses can be seen, he says, in the low levels of involvement and organizational membership in voluntary associations throughout both Eastern and Central Europe and in Russia itself. He provides a variety of structural reasons for lack of engagement and says (Howard, 2003, p. 24): "in short, the Communist Party sought to monitor and control virtually every aspect of economic, political, and even social life, and this feature distinguished communism from other non-democratic authoritarian regimes." This also produced an ongoing mindset that militates against current involvement in civil society organizations.

Michael Edwards (2009) goes even further in his analysis of civil society. He says (p. vii) that, since the first edition of his book in 2003, "governments from Russia to Brazil, Egypt to Cambodia, and Uganda to the United States have formulated tighter laws, regulations and registration requirements for NGOs and other civic

groups," much of this being justified as part of the war on terror. Specifically, in Eastern Europe the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 "gave the idea of civil society a prominence it had not enjoyed since the Enlightenment," he writes, and became "a rallying cry for dissidents" and "a vehicle for achieving [liberal democratic norms] by building social movements strong enough to overthrow authoritarian states"; but the associational life that defined civil society was "disregarded fairly quickly once the dissidents were elected into office" (Edwards, 2009, p. 12). Thus a civil society reabsorbed by the state was redefined by former dissidents into a new orthodoxy (see Seligman, 1992).

In Seligman's terms, the *Realpolitik* that informs Edwards' analysis is almost beside the point. He argues that in East and Central Europe "the historical legacy of a relatively unmodernized and organic State never accepted the principle of individual autonomy and equality as the basis of the polity"; rather,

> the establishment of civil society is … threatened by precisely the continued existence of ethnic solidarities whose terms of individual membership and relations to society at large as well as to the State are not defined solely by such [corporate group] interests and instrumental–rational modes of behavior. Quite the opposite. The continuity of ethnic loyalties and solidarities (and so also the potential for ethnic exclusion) within groups undercuts the very definition of universal citizenship within the nation-state upon which the former (Western) type of interest group is based. (Seligman, 1992, p. 140)

In central Asia the five "stans" that hived off after the Soviet Union collapsed were the recipients of significant amounts from Western aid agencies – amounts designed to help develop civil society. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan developed their civil societies more quickly than the other three "stans" (Buxton, 2011, p. 30). But in 2005 events occurring in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and an uprising in Uzbekistan resulted in liberals and democrats pressing the civil society agenda in Kyrgyzstan even harder, while "neighboring rulers and elites took fright, reined in civil society and international development programs, and a period of reaction gradually set in" (p. 30). In many respects Buxton's discussion of the reasons for the difficulties experienced in central Asia to develop civil society parallels that of Howard (see Buxton, 2011, p. 38). The reality of these societies, which were crumbling as their interrelated economies and political systems collapsed, made the construction of civil society problematic. Most people felt that they had suffered as a result of the Soviet collapse, and many were nostalgic for the old Soviet state as an imagined community (p. 41).

Sara Roy's study of the role of Hamas in supporting civil society in Gaza (Roy, 2011, p. 68), while recognizing that there were differences in the definition of a civil society in how religion fitted in it among those whom she queried, also indicated that "an Islamic civil society does not differ in certain ways from a non-Islamic or secular civil society but embraces some of the same values (e.g., civility, tolerance) and roles (e.g., independent entities compensating for the deficiencies

of the 'state')." The major difference in perspective came in relation to the relationship of religion and the state. Whereas in secular or Western-based understandings religion would exist entirely within the realm of civil society, Islamists viewed religion "as an expression of cultural identity," and thus

> situated squarely in the public sphere, given its emphasis on justice, equality, and modernity; in this regard, respondents emphasized that religion is not an obstacle to the development of a vibrant civil society but rather a core feature of it. (Roy, 2011, p. 68)

The umma (Islamic society) was itself a version of civil society, and,

> given their strong and consistent ties to the local grass roots, Islamic social institutions provide a stronger foundation for building a civil society than their secular counterparts, which have, in many cases, loosened those local ties in favor of a more global constituency.

Roy concludes that, "although traditional Islamic societies did not experience the kind of civil society that later emerged in Europe, they did possess those conditions necessary (albeit insufficient) for the development of a viable civil society and associational life" (p. 70). She quotes the Tunisian Islamist Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, exiled leader of the Tunisian Islamic al-Nahda [Renaissance] party, who wrote:

> Civil society was proposed as a counter to the natural state that preceded it. Humans in the natural state were said to have been dominated by anarchy, power, oppression, and hegemony, whereas the newly conceived civil society is founded on a contract among free individuals." (Quoted in Roy, 2011, p. 70)

Roy then argues:

> These ideas formed the theoretical and political foundation for modern Islamist debates on the role of civil society and could, under better political conditions in Palestine and the region as a whole, act as forces of moderation, stability, and development. (Roy, 2011, p. 70)

The structures available within the Islamic tradition to build both community and civil society were destroyed by the colonialist interventions in the "Arab and Islamic countries," but the "worst assault came after independence and the establishment of secular Muslim regimes, which placed all religious institutions and associations under government control, stripping them of their independence" (p. 75).[1] "So degraded, religious institutions became instruments for rulers to use to further their own (secular) goals" (p. 76). These developments made it problematic whether civil society could re-emerge, and this problem was exacerbated by the "extremist thinking within the Islamic movement."

In Roy's view, the Palestinian group Hamas puts representative authority (or political legitimacy) above religious authority; "hence, for Hamas it is more

important for political authority to obtain popular trust than religious sanction" (p. 84). Legitimate authority requires *shura* (the ruler's consultations with the people) and *ijma* (need for consensus).

> Hamas further argues that a divine contract without a social contract is illegitimate, as is the social without the divine, further underlining the importance of consent and consultation. In the former the people's sovereignty is denied, and in the latter God's sovereignty. (Roy, 2011, p. 84)

Such a position, however, does not imply that all parties living within an Islamic state must adhere to Islamic law (*sharia*), however defined; there are various interpretations of the requirements of *sharia*, and Hamas adopted the most moderate of these.

> Al-Ghannouchi (like some leaders of Hamas) argues not only that pluralism is sanctioned by religion – even to the point of allowing parties that advocated communism and atheism – but that religion and democracy are not contradictory. He argues that Islam, which is the distinguishing feature of an Islamic civil society, has a civilizing influence on its members and consolidates civil society through a belief that all people are equal and judged according to their deeds; a belief in the value of hard work, which is considered a religious duty; the principle that preserving life and bettering the community as a whole is more important than preserving individual wealth; a passion for freedom; and the belief that the authority of religion is based on the freedom of *ijtihad*, which values freedom and creativity. (Roy, 2011, pp. 85–86)

What we are trying to suggest here is that, while the phrase "civil society" may be seen as an imprecise construct – and thus open to various, if not opposing interpretations – it is still a fecund concept, with a heuristic power that can be used in efforts to understand the nature of political versus social or cultural legitimacy in various contexts. In Gramsci's original conception it provides, in various ways, a means to posit opposition; or it yields collaboration/legitimation between different spheres of activity, some of which would otherwise be silent, if not illegitimate, in the maintenance of collective life. It carries a moral dimension – sometimes in league with religious tradition, although this is not required – that can balance the power exercised by state institutions.

International Civil Society

The difficulty of applying any of these perspectives to an international context in order to understand civil society is that there is no multinational state for civil society to oppose, or even against which it might be recognized. This has not prevented the development of international civil society institutions, however. What such organizations can "oppose" or address is international organizations such as the United Nations and its various agencies, military alliances (NATO),

regional entities such as the EU, multinational corporations, or organized crime syndicates – including syndicates dealing with activities in human trafficking, with displaced persons (refugees and the internally displaced), with terrorist groups and cross-border tribal uprisings or ethnically based liberation movements (like that of the Kurdish people), with repression of self-rule (as in Tibet), with immigration (legal or otherwise), and with the movement and working conditions of labor. This last one is an international environmental movement animated by research into climate change and a sense that the countries that are disproportionately creating this problem (notably China and the United States) are not responding adequately to the issue and are endangering other societies around the globe. The lack of a single state to target in most of these situations has not meant that civil society organizations have no entity to address.

Regional movements against government oppression, of the kind that have occurred in the Arab states, learn from previous movements and adapt their tactics to their particular situations. Gandhi's non-violence campaign against British rule in the 1940s, for instance, was part of Martin Luther King's portfolio in the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, and his tactics, including marches, sit-ins, and passive resistance to police authority, have been used throughout the Arab world, especially in Tahrir Square in Egypt – a movement that also borrowed from protests in Serbia in the 1990s and from the possibilities offered by social media in the last decade, although this may have been overblown in the international press.

The Occupy movement also learned from many previous international efforts to respond to globalization, especially from the protests against free trade agreements and against the control of the world economy by G20 countries. Such protests typically occur at G20 economic summit meetings that are held in various cities around the globe. Ian Urbina, writing in a blog under the *New York Times* banner (Urbina, 2009), claimed that protesters who were preparing for the G20 economic summit in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, "have been twittering."

> Independent reporters have been filing their own articles and prepping radio broadcasts. One of the best all-purpose sites with updates from the streets is being hosted by Indymedia Pittsburgh. Local protest organizers have also circulated an annotated online map of sites for possible direct action on Thursday and Friday. Ordinary citizens have been documenting the truly huge police build-up and security preparations. Protesters have posted a live feed of the city's police scanner to track certain communications. Protesters have also pulled together a number of short videos highlighting their gripes with the global financial system; some bring a touch of humor, others, less so. There is the standard footage and interviews from marches, put together by groups on their websites and personal blogs.

David Held writes that globalization

> is cultural as well as commercial and in addition it is legal: it is about power as much as prosperity or the lack of it. From the United Nations to the European Union, from

> changes to the laws of war to the entrenchment of human rights, from the emergence of international environmental regimes to the foundation of the International Criminal Court, new political narratives are being told – narratives which seek to reframe human activity and entrench it in law, rights and responsibilities that are worldwide in their reach and universal in their principles. (Held, 2005, p. 2)

Such efforts at globalization, however, with their emphasis on trade and economic development largely in the hands of multinational corporations, resulted in widespread objections to such narrow-mindedness, especially in light of the difficulties of reaching the Millennium Development Goals that established minimum humanitarian levels that should accompany economic development, especially for the populations of non-industrialized countries. Here is the result:

> Slowly, attention has shifted from an exclusive emphasis on liberalization and privatization to a concern with the institutional underpinnings of successful market activity. A new agenda has emerged which still champions large parts of the old agenda, but adds governance and anti-corruption measures, legal and administrative reform, financial regulation, labour market flexibility and the importance of social safety nets. (Held, 2005, p. 17)

The Public Sphere

The public sphere is the locus of action of differing visions of society: this is where arguments confront one other and where they seek support from different sectors of society. This public sphere includes space for elections and the accompanying "stump speeches," debates, and political advertising (including advocacy ads by civil society organizations such as labor or trade unions, special interest groups, good government groups, and the like), news reporting and fact checking; space for scientific result publication, including the popularized versions of the daily press; space for legislative debates, job actions, marches in favor of or against causes, editorial commentary and comedy based on political positions or ideologies, public policy disputes, stockholder assemblies, initial public offerings (IPOs), reports of everyday life, accidents, crimes, technological innovations, standardized testing results, and so on. All these contend for people's attention and seek allegiance to different causes. This public sphere encompasses the activities of the media, the use of the Internet (including social media sites, news sites, blogs, mash-ups, and so on), legislative assemblies, and the street. It is where the robustness of any democracy is tested under fire.

The World Bank says that the public sphere

> is at the center of participatory approaches to democracy. The public sphere is the arena where citizens come together, exchange opinions regarding public affairs, discuss, deliberate, and eventually form public opinion. The arena can be a specific place where citizens gather (for instance, a town hall meeting), but it can also be a

> communication infrastructure through which citizens send and receive information and opinions. The public sphere is a central aspect of good governance. Without a functioning and democratic public sphere, government officials cannot be held accountable for their actions, and citizens will not be able to assert any influence over political decisions. (World Bank, n.d., p. 1)

The development of a notion of the public sphere is grounded in the work of Jürgen Habermas. His book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* has two major themes, as Douglas Kellner tells us: an analysis of the development of the public sphere; and

> an account of the structural change of the public sphere in the contemporary era with the rise of state capitalism, the culture industries, and the increasingly powerful positions of economic corporations and big business in public life. On this account, big economic and governmental organizations took over the public sphere, while citizens became content to become primarily consumers of goods, services, political administration, and spectacle. (Kellner, n.d.)

It is thus both a history and a critique.

Peter Dahlgren (2005, p. 148) argues that there are three main analytic dimensions to the public sphere: the structural, the representational, and the interactional. "In schematic terms," he says,

> a functioning public sphere is understood as a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates – ideally in an unfettered manner – and also the formation of political will (i.e., public opinion). These spaces, in which the mass media and now, more recently, the newer interactive media figure prominently, also serve to facilitate communicative links between citizens and the power holders of society. (Dahlgren, 2005, p. 149)

The structural aspects of the public sphere, Dahlgren says, direct "our attention to such classic democratic issues as freedom of speech, access, and the dynamic of inclusion/exclusion," dimensions that are affected by media organizations and political institutions. "A society where democratic tendencies are weak is not going to give rise to healthy institutional structures for the public sphere, which in turn means that the representational dimension will be inadequate." The structure of the public sphere influences how "communicative spaces relevant to democracy are broadly configured." The representational aspect "refers to the output of the media, the mass media as well as 'minimedia' that target specific small groups via, for example newsletters or campaign promotion material." In the Internet age, this includes using it for dissemination purposes, beyond the more traditional vehicles and channels for such distribution. The representation dimension allows for examination "of all the familiar questions and criteria about media output for political communication, including fairness, accuracy, completeness, pluralism of views, agenda setting, ideological tendencies, modes of address, and so forth." Finally, the

interactional aspects of the public sphere require us to go beyond the idea of audiences to that of publics. Using both Habermas and John Dewey, Dahlgren suggests this as the more useful term. "Publics … exist as discursive interactional processes; atomized individuals, consuming media in their homes, do not comprise a public." What emerges from the public is public opinion – not merely that captured by polling, but those that engaged in deliberation.

Dahlgren then discusses interaction under two aspects. First is the public's encounter with the media and its effort to make sense of them, interpret them, and then use them for its own purposes. Second is the interaction among citizens themselves, which can include person-to-person dyadic conversations, interactions in large meetings, and, we would argue, similar kinds of interactions that occur via the web, such as those via email, the writing of and response to blogs, tweeting, Instagraming, comments on or posting external information on a Facebook timeline, forwarding such information to contacts in various ways, signing online petitions, and the like. All such interactions expand the space for interaction that might otherwise occur through demonstration, march, occupation, or sit-in in the physical environment. Now much of it occurs in the virtual environment, which is connected to the physical (or corporeal, if you will) via the tendrils of the web. Such activities function using a variety of discursive practices, each with a "psychocultural aspect: in this sense, the public sphere has a very fluid, sprawling quality," the Internet further accentuating it. Empirically speaking, Dahlgren says, "the categories of representation and interaction of the Net often blur into each other."

Jodi Dean (2003), writing a couple of years before Dahlgren, argues that the Internet is not a public sphere, thus making the issue one for the public sphere to resolve, as the Internet itself becomes a contested space. She says that the public sphere has a set of norms (equality, transparency, inclusivity, rationality) and an architecture consisting of site, goal, means, norms, and vehicle. And the critiques made of the concept of the public sphere, she argues, are not salvaged by changing the concept so as to include "subaltern oppositional counter publics, trading on the normative currency of the concept while trying to avoid its exclusionary dimensions" (Dean, 2003, p. 96). And, while she admits that the idea of the public sphere has been reinvigorated as a result of the development of new communications technologies (p. 97), she denies that computer-aided interactions qualify as such a sphere.

> I claimed at the outset that the Net is nothing like a public sphere. I now defend this claim with two moves. First, I consider how public sphere norms appear in cybertheory. They appear in two completely opposed ways: as cyberia's lack and as its excess. Second, I take this oscillation as an indication of the need for a broader framework of analysis, one that inquires into the interests served by thinking of the Net in terms of a public sphere. (Dean, 2003, p. 97)

Without the operational norms that characterize a true public sphere, she says, the Internet is merely "an ideology of publicity in the service of communicative capitalism" (p. 98).

Political Economy and the Culture Industry

Dean's conclusion takes the conversation into the realm of political economy: How do the financing, regulation, use, and discursive realities of the Internet control the effective uses to which the Internet can be put, and how does its use result in the maintenance or dissolution (perhaps redistribution) of power (political, economic, social, or cultural), the system of legitimacy, and the possible interpretations that can be made of the symbolic structures through which the polity would crystalize into agents of accommodation or revolution, co-optation or independence?

The political economy of post-mercantilist Europe, or early industrial Europe, was far different from what it is today. And, while Habermas was quite conscious of the political economies of the societies he examined (France, Germany, and Great Britain), the question is whether the analytic structures employed in that period carry into the current situation with the same authority.

It is useful here, we think, to speak of how political economy, and specifically ideas concerning the operation of the culture industry – as Theodor Adorno named it – impact on the operations of the public sphere, where civil society has its genesis and exercises its independence or discovers its subservience. Adorno wrote, of course, before the time of modern political economy, as he died in 1969. His principal object of analysis as the "central sector of the culture industry" was film, although he also paid considerable attention to recorded music (Adorno, 1991, p. 100).

Adorno's perspective was developed at a time when the mass media was developing and, as such, his perspective assumed that the culture industry was that economic entity that excelled in reaching "the missions towards which it is directed," not as a primary focus, but as a secondary one, constructed as object in the service of the conservative status quo (Adorno, 1991, p. 99). What this industry did (and thus what its political economy was) was to transfer the profit motive "naked onto cultural forms." The dignity of human beings that had been affirmed by the development of culture – with its ideals and archetypes, challenging the idea of an unequal humanity by ennobling the common man in artistic representations of various kinds – was reduced through a mechanized representation (to draw from Walter Benjamin) by the mass media, which thereby debased humanity again (p. 100). The ideology of the culture industry, Adorno argued, made

> use of the star system, borrowed from individualistic art and commercial exploitation. The more dehumanized its methods of operation and content, the more diligently and successfully the culture industry propagates supposedly great personalities and operates with heart-throbs. It is industrial more in a sociological sense, nothing is manufactured – as in the rationalization of office work – rather than in the sense of anything really and actually produced by technological rationality. (Adorno, 1991, p. 101)

A bit later he says:

> the technique of the culture industry is, from the beginning, one of distribution and mechanical reproduction, and finds ideological support precisely in so far as it carefully shields itself from the full potential of the techniques contained in its products. It lives parasitically from the extra-artistic technique of the material production of goods, without regard for the obligation to the internal artistic whole implied by its functionality… (Adorno, 1991, p. 101)

Two more brief comments from Adorno will suffice. First, he argued, "because of its social role, disturbing questions about its quality, about truth or untruth, and about the aesthetic niveau of the culture industry's emissions are repressed, or at least excluded from the so-called sociology of communications" (p. 102). Second, "the advice to be gained from manifestations of the culture industry is vacuous, banal or worse, and he behaviour patterns are shamelessly conformist" (p. 103).[2]

Applying Adorno's perspective to the web forces theory to recognize that many of the same dynamics that described film in his day also apply to the Internet today. As Dean suggests, there are no norms for using the Internet – it's a "wild West." What attracts the most "views" is often commercial sites; and sites operating traditional media (especially television) have moved rapidly to give reasons to web users to follow their programs by setting up program-specific sites, integrating TV watching with a second screen experience, and inviting people to use their mobile phones or tablets to "vote" for particular program endings. These corporations, along with Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook, see the control of eyeballs as a means to profit, and the more often they can entice users to return to their sites or to stay on their sites (by watching a full program episode, for instance), the more profits they can make from the various advertising schemes at work there. Multiple Twitter hashtags are also used during activities, especially professional sports programs, and players are encouraged to set up Twitter accounts and to accrue followers, as this will play on their "celebrity" status and thereby improve TV ratings for their games and attendance at their stadia. TV and movie celebrities and musical artists also use social networking sites to sell merchandise, allow downloads of clips and songs, and allow tweeting their followers. Disgrace *à la* Charlie Sheen only increases one's following, and providing a collective persona for followers (*à la* Lady Gaga's "Little Monsters") secures a sense of belonging and intimacy with someone one would not otherwise have the opportunity to get "close" to. None of this, of course, comes close to the process of enabling a public to deliberate for the common good. It is messiah and apostles.

However, this system – as flawed and vacuous as it is – does provide a space, however small in comparison to the whole, for nascent publics to form and grow. Although the means of doing so are tainted (especially by media representations), what is used for the benefit of celebrity can also be used for the benefit of the politically engaged, if not of the disadvantaged (who often have limited to no access to the technologies required by the system). This is what Dahlgren is counting on in his analysis.

Notes

1 For this part of her analysis Roy depends on the work of Munir Shafiq, a Palestinian writer.

2 Adorno's perspective on the culture industry is not idiosyncratic. Jules Henry, writing of advertising, said: "to try to fob off on [advertisers'] *critics* the notion that the radio and TV catastrophes are CULTURE is beyond belief in people not harbored safely behind the protective screens of a psychiatric hospital. Let me put it this way: a fundamental index of schizophrenia is disconnectedness, so that one is unaware of how other people think and feel [the problem with advertisers]" (Henry, 1965, p. 94). "Consumption autarchy, the drive toward higher profits, and alienation from Self are the factors that account for advertising" (p. 95).

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19

The Genesis of Social Responsibility Theory
William Ernest Hocking and Positive Freedom

Clifford G. Christians and P. Mark Fackler

Robert Maynard Hutchins, when appointed chair of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, invited some of the best minds in America to serve as members. As president of the University of Chicago and former dean of the Yale Law School, he had a reputation that attracted the elite from higher education, law, finance, and government. William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966), recently retired as head of Harvard's philosophy department, illustrates the stature of the Commission's membership. The first American to study with Edmund Husserl at Göttingen in Germany, Hocking became Josiah Royce's younger colleague at Harvard. His appointments to both the Gifford and the Hibbert Lectures indicate his distinction in philosophical idealism. John Lachs and D. Micah Hester (2004, p. 3) describe him as "second only to Dewey in the breadth of his thinking."[1]

From the astonishing variety and quantity of his scholarly materials, three books have emerged as classics in the philosophical literature: *Human Nature and Its Remaking* (Hocking, 1918); *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (Hocking, 1912) (published in 10 editions); and *The Coming World Civilization*, first published in 1956. The report entitled *Freedom of the Press: A Framework of Principle* (Hocking, 1947) has also achieved notoriety, as the background document for the Hutchins Commission's deliberations.[2] Together, these studies provide an ontological basis on which we can rest both freedom and responsibility. Rather than offering a doctrine of individual autonomy, Hocking turned both terms on their head – substituting a communitarian intersubjectivity for individualism, and freedom to serve for a self-centered autonomy.

This ontological basis created by Hocking, as reported in the present chapter, offers a theoretical core to the concept of positive freedom. In the First Amendment tradition, press freedom has been understood as restraint on government control

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of public discourse. Freedom to speak or publish has meant that the government does not have the power to establish content qualifications, nor can it prohibit speech with which it disagrees – barring other considerations. But any analysis of democratic societies notes that this *negative freedom* has achieved mixed results. Of particular concern is the absence of *positive freedom* in this tradition: that is, the absence of credible public obligations and duties that actually guide speech and not merely forbid the government from regulating it. This chapter intends to show that Hocking, in his work on the Hutchins Commission, generated a theory of positive freedom that empowers ethical conversation toward the new social media and democratized news. This contribution we regard as crucial to filling gaps in the older ethics of negative freedom. Understanding Hocking's positive freedom, we may begin to speak across cultures in an era typified by the media's global reach.

Hocking's Radical Alternative

The organizing concept in *Freedom of the Press* (Hocking, 1947) is positive liberty. Hocking developed in this volume a definition of freedom distinct from that of classical liberalism, in which a negative conception of liberty equates freedom with the absence of arbitrary restraint. In the political theory underlying liberal democracy, individuals possess an inner citadel that is inviolate, and therefore they must be left alone to pursue those ends that each one considers right or sacred. From this perspective, to contravene these natural rights is to violate the self's autonomy. Negative freedom is considered a mature state of decision making, free both from internal constraints like fear and ignorance and from external constraints.

In Hocking's view, negative freedom was bankrupt. As he argued in a 1935 symposium called by the American Philosophical Association (Hocking, 1935), deficiencies in classical liberalism's wholesale commitment to autonomy had become obvious to him at both the conceptual and the empirical level, for all the historical importance of liberalism in political matters. He recognized that John Stuart Mill's argument for freedom from coercion, for example, was a significant source of constraint on undue government encroachment. But Hocking was concerned that a theory of free expression anchored in individual rights does not resolve certain fundamental disagreements that have arisen in Western democratic history – or even advance the discussion. For instance, on what grounds can defenders of negative liberty motivate citizens to take long-term goals seriously? Presuming that a viable social order cannot merely lurch along from day to day, negative liberty does not inspire us with a durable vision of the future. Hocking also contended that a visceral commitment to negative freedom allows the press as a social institution to be co-opted by the technical demands of media technologies and by professional privilege.

Classical liberalism has been "the most successful political hypothesis of human history" (Thigpen, 1972, p. 86), yet its weaknesses show up in the form of menacing evils (Hocking, 1935, p. 230). In the same way classical liberal press theory fails the

modern era. Its "marketplace of ideas" is a fiction that assumes truth to be present and entitled to win in the only test that matters, free competition. A theory that opposes all censorship fails to recognize that context is supremely important in any presentation of ideas, and humanly important when considering the histories and traditions at stake. While democratic societies may still retain a residual belief in the open exchange of opinions, Hocking would have scolded absolutists for supporting the swastika in Skokie, or the promotion of white separatism in Stormfront, the website. Those who exercise the right of free expression must exercise it in good will, with a commitment to truth and the common good. These modifiers led Hocking to claim a new right, the right of the public to adequate and truthful news (Thigpen, 1972, p. 86), a positive right that obliges journalists, clergy, politicians, and now bloggers – influential voices in the public sphere – to take council of moral boundaries. The highest human enterprise may be the "will-to-power through ideas," yet ideas worth expressing are vetted in the open and by the public.

> Whatever one's final philosophy, it can never be held as a purely private result: as a supposed body of truth about the living world. There is inseparable from it the impulse to knead it into the self-consciousness of the world – a refinement but not a surrender of the will to power. All life has this self-propagating impulse. (Hocking, 1926, p. 319)

Against an intellectually and historically disabled negative freedom, Hocking contended that the state bears responsibility for fostering the liberty of its institutions, education being its primary agent. Hocking criticized experiential learning as subhuman, the way animals learn. Humans alone "live in the world of ideas" as our "distinguishing mark" (Hocking, 1934, p. 164). Education must aid the development of a worldview and moral base. Humanity's sole inalienable right, the freedom to be whole, requires moral training. Instead of the unrestrained liberty of the weed, as Hocking put it, he preferred the constrained liberty of the garden that is fertile, organic, and sustainable.

> Liberty is a positive thing and demands tools to work with and food to grown on, the mental capital of working beliefs to begin life with. … Education that prefers a vacuum because it is "free" is both false and cruel. Moral education should confer the best we ourselves can see, not as finality but as our best judgment. (Hocking, 1937, p. 178)

Out of this more complicated view of freedom – and consequent belief in an active state of promoting the conditions of liberty – the Hutchins Commission argued for the opposite of classical liberalism's negative freedom and austere state. Through Hocking, the Commission contended that a philosophically different view of freedom was needed for an economically powerful and educationally oriented press to prosper in the post-World War II era. Hocking insisted that liberty cannot be distinguished from the conditions of its existence. In his role as the Commission's principal philosopher, Hocking contended that freedom of expression should no longer be considered an inalienable natural right, but an earned moral right.

He was impatient with classical liberalism's belief in unconditional rights to life, liberty, and property. The pernicious separation of these rights from their moral conditions turned them into privileges, precisely what liberal revolutions are inspired to destroy (Hocking, 1937, p. 55). No rights exist apart from moral conditions. "Without good will, all rights drop off" (p. 54).

Hocking's *Framework of Principle* (1947) is a carefully reasoned argument that freedom – given our status as social beings – is not unconditional, but involves the necessity to assume and perform duties toward others. Although errors are inevitable, what cancels the ground of freedom

> is deliberate or irresponsible doing wrong adopted as a policy. Here the good will of the claimants, which is their good faith with society, is purposely put aside; the resulting errors are not the tolerable errors incident to a process of learning. (Hocking, 1947, p. 66)

In the context of his ongoing integration of universals with experience, Hocking understood positive freedom as conditional. He recognized it as a defining feature of our humanness, but he faced squarely our tendency to serve ourselves rather than use our freedom for the common good.

Hocking concluded that, if one takes seriously the history of ideas and culture, freedom's limited scope has never been contradicted. He reminds us that even John Stuart Mill accepted restraints, such as forcibly preventing someone from crossing a collapsing bridge if no time is left for a warning. Mill used his famous harm principle to limit speech that excites violence. Thus Hocking warned political theorists in the tradition of Locke, Mill, Constant, and de Tocqueville not to misrepresent the positive conception as a specious disguise for tyranny. Admittedly positive freedom can be seen as encouraging government interference, though *Freedom of the Press: A Framework of Principle* itself never condones political intervention into the press's structure or content.[3] And the Hutchins Report, which reflects Hocking's argumentation, views the government as a "residual legatee" of last resort, in case of gross negligence by the press.

Hocking grounds positive freedom ontologically. Hocking demonstrates that, rather than patchwork and synthesis, a social theory of liberty is required that fundamentally reconceptualizes the issues and conclusions. He does not defend this alternative as merely salutary at his own time of momentous change in media technologies, but he develops a theoretical rationale for positive freedom.[4] Consistent with his philosophical orientation as a whole, he contradicts the assumption that no metaphysical truth exists, a notion popular among empiricists of his era. He aims to demonstrate that finally giving freedom a metaphysical home is crucial to the concept's long-term vitality and universal scope.

> The issue at the gate of the new day is whether we can set out democracy on something beyond man the scientific fact. … Democracy cannot rest its case on either the biological or the psychological human creature. Democracy is not based on what is but on

> what ought to be. … The bond of equality and fraternity is to be found, not in scientific measurement, but in common devotion to a goal which is beyond them all. (Hocking, 1942, p. 61)

Hocking is correct that building a theory of freedom is an arduous, complicated, and multileveled enterprise, but justifying a basis for moral judgments and public policy must be accomplished nonetheless. He is not content to debate freedom in a juridical context where constitutional guarantees and shield laws and court decisions control the parameters of our understanding. Endless fussing over legal matters such as government intrusion, he concludes appropriately, prevents a more fundamental analysis of liberty's character. Freedom needs, in his view, an intellectual grounding in the nature of being itself. He develops, through the concept of positive freedom, a rigorous philosophical context in which responsibility becomes not just an archaic survivor from a prescientific age, but a constituent part of an ontology of the human being. The justificatory ground, within social responsibility theory as Hocking conceived of it, is the nature of human beings. Paul Tillich echoed a similar conclusion:

> The roots of the moral imperative, the criteria of its validity, the sources of its contents, the forces of its realization, all this can be elaborated only in terms of an analysis of man's [*sic*] being and universal being. There is no answer in ethics without an explicit or implicit assertion about the nature of being. (Tillich, 1954, p. 73)

The foundation of the strongest possible notion of accountability is the nature of human being itself, compatible with but not necessarily bound to or defined by any one particular culture or sociopolitical system. Thus, he advocates a metaphysics of being in which human life is not merely a constituent part but the epicenter. Hocking shows that, when rational agents take responsibility for their actions, this is not a delusion or a foolish imposition on themselves. The drive to communicate is innate; in Hocking's words, persons "inhere in a common life" (Hocking, 1926, p. 344). It is not the job of sociology or psychology to assess or diminish this fundamental aspect of human experience, but the job of metaphysics, and indeed of religious reflection (p. 377). He sees no dilemma here. While cultivating the responsibility aspect of our humanness, we are not allowing our freedom to atrophy or our humanity to dim in the light of a reductionist scientism.

Intersubjectivity was Hocking's label for contending that all persons, as subjects of one divine being, are interrelated by the very fact of their common integration prior to any communication.[5] Intersubjectivity is the fountain of all the arts and the ground of communication. Underneath humankind's communal existence is "a common, persuasive, constant experience of an active, creative, other mind, which, by virtue of its scope and power, we recognize as the mind of God" (Rouner, 1969, p. 104). The human predilection to communicate presupposes a region beyond our individual selves, which we possess in common with others. The drive to interface with others is a feature of our beingness. Hocking's very definition of persons presupposes that they "inhere in a common life" (Hocking, 1926, p. 344). And this

dimension of our humanity cannot be examined by sociology, but by philosophy. The novelty of Hocking's method consists in connecting his idealism with democratic politics and everyday experience. His understanding of intersubjectivity, built around community and a universal life force, is a deliberate alternative to the atomistic insistence, in classical liberalism, on the individual's sacred rights.

Already in 1942, Erich Fromm of the Frankfurt School distinguished positive and negative liberty (Fromm, 1942). A decade later, while not building directly on Hocking, Isaiah Berlin affirmed the intellectual importance of theorizing freedom. In a seminal essay published in 1958, Berlin differentiated negative and positive liberty as two streams in democratic political philosophy – the two models that distinguished John Locke from Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Berlin, 1969). Berlin observed that liberal politics avoids polarization through a compromise in everyday affairs, placing positive freedom in the service of its negative counterpart: "Perhaps the chief value for liberals of political – positive – rights, or participating in the government, is as a means of protecting what they hold to be an ultimate value, namely – negative – liberty" (Berlin, 1969, p. 165). The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (2008) illustrates the ongoing philosophical interest in the meaning of liberty; various dimensions of the concept are included in social contract theory debates ever since Rousseau.[6] Because of his focus on the press' role in democratic societies, Hocking emphasized political structures and agency; but, theoretically, his ontological version of positive liberty accounts for the breadth of the intellectual work on it, that is, including sociological freedom from racism, sexism, and classism.

For Hocking and the members of his circle, who ground freedom morally rather than legally, morality requires accountability, and we cannot be held accountable for our decisions if they are not freely made. What Hocking develops is the foundation for this accountable freedom, an understanding of freedom in which accountability provides its rationale. Advocates of this ethics of duty see responsibility as an ever present moral demand. In this sense we are first of all required to act responsibly not because we are professional journalists, but because we are human beings. Our humanity has primacy over our roles.

Debates over policy, shield laws, freedom of information probes, and Supreme Court rulings obscure social responsibility's more critical challenge to defend its view of freedom philosophically. The question is whether positive freedom can be reconstructed in terms of the nature of being. Hocking developed an intellectually rich notion of positive freedom, though it has been largely ignored. The vitality of social responsibility at this juncture depends more on conceptually recovering positive freedom than on winning debates over journalistic strategy.

Postive Freedom and the News

Hocking's positive freedom rooted in philosophical anthropology is a radical concept. Working from his *Freedom of the Press* contributes ongoing vitality to our understanding of journalism as it goes through another technological upheaval,

similar in scope to the post-World War II revolution in which Hocking wrote. The Hutchins Commission agreed on publishing a report that communicates with a single voice, and therefore *A Free and Responsible Press* often speaks in the generalities that result from compromise. Influential member and vice-chairman Zechariah Chafee, Jr. reflected a liberal emphasis on rights and a suspicion of government action in his 1947 two-volume *Government and Mass Communication*, and Hocking had to balance his more innovative contribution with this restrictive model.

While "the Commission's preference for positive liberty is implicit in the title of its report, *A Free and Responsible Press*," its clear voice on this commitment is muddled by its adopting the recommendation of member Harold Lasswell "that it endorse both negative and positive liberty" (Nerone, 1995, pp. 93–94). Social responsibility theory has not achieved its full potential because intellectual work since 1947 has typically followed the report's superficial version of social responsibility. The results of a social responsibility theory in which freedom is ambiguous have been harsh professionally. Journalists tend to consider themselves responsible if they follow codes of ethics and institutional standards, even though these trappings insulate them from the very public that the idea of social responsibility calls them to serve. In James Carey's terms, "the public will begin to awaken when they are addressed as a conversational partner and are encouraged to talk rather than sit passively as spectators before a discussion conducted by journalists and experts" (Carey, 1987, p. 17).

Rather than being content with an ambiguous positive freedom and let social responsibility theory fade into history, media ethics would be strengthened if we gave positive freedom its full weight. Several applications are possible of the thick version that indicate positive freedom's ongoing relevance, and these follow.

Organizational culture

"Corporate social responsibility" best describes Hocking's understanding of social responsibility. It pervades the Commission's report, given its concern that the mass media were developing into big business institutions along with the rise of industrial democracy spurred by World War II. However, the report is not as clear-sighted on the definition and meaning of the concept as is Hocking's *Freedom of the Press*. The report allows the individual liberty of negative freedom to slide into an individualist understanding of positive freedom, enabling persons to exercise their individual rights. On the other hand, Hocking's ontological definition of positive freedom gives corporate social responsibility priority and intellectual substance. By reversing the roles they actually played in 1947 – that is, by putting *Freedom of the Press* in the foreground and *A Free and Responsible Press* in the background – Hocking's positive freedom has ongoing relevance for understanding the ebb and flow of responsible journalism in an age of global technology. Hocking posited the community as the gateway to understanding persons and was thus a distinctive advocate of what is now labeled communitarianism.

What he offers is a conceptually rigorous public philosophy in which self, community, and universal humanness are interdependent and all equally important.

If one reads Hocking's ontological version of positive freedom back into the Hutchins Commission's concern with big business, social responsibility is anchored in corporate morality. A legitimate concept of corporate social responsibility is rooted in the idea of communal moral agency, and Hocking opens that pathway. A judge once bemoaned that corporations have "no pants to kick or soul to damn," and concluded, "by God, they ought to have both" (Donaldson, 1982, p. 1). Unlike an actual person, corporations have no conscience to keep them awake at night, no emotions for psychiatrists to analyze, and no body to be thrown into jail. Obviously, institutions are more than impersonal machines. They do resemble a complicated package of gears, engines, and levers; but corporations, like people, write contracts, meet deadlines, take precautions, act incompetently, issue reports, pay taxes, own property, and incur financial liability.

Despite the suggestive parallels between corporations and persons, the former are puzzling to our moral understanding. No one argues that institutions should register for the draft and are entitled to retirement benefits or investiture. As Thomas Donaldson concludes correctly: "Can corporations have a right to worship as they please? To pursue happiness? [They] fail to qualify as moral persons … in a literal sense of the term" (1982, p. 23).

The solution to the machine–person dichotomy is the cultural model that considers the corporation a moral entity, but not a moral person. Classical liberalism's individualism puts persons and organizations in opposition to each other. Hocking's framework brings community, the universal, and persons together as responsible entities and instructs us to see organizations in cultural terms, not merely as administrative entities. Institutions can thus be said to incorporate values into their organizational decision making and to engage in moral reasoning, but that does not mean that they include all dimensions of personal morality, such as pleasure and guilt. The creation and charter of corporations, and their operating procedures, those together give them legal identity, confer upon them a responsibility to fulfill their organizational discourse. Institutions whose planning, policy, and performance are based on rational deliberation and considered juristic can be said to be morally responsible. A common good will should undergird conscious corporate policies, and nurturing that good ought to be an organizational obligation. Those who locate ethics outside the corporation exaggerate the differences between individuals and institutions; they put the same distance between persons and organizations as Lockean theory does between individuals and society.

Defending a meaningful sense of corporate moral agency in Hocking's terms involves complicated issues in organizational theory. The dominant tradition has been functionalist in character. With a positivist epistemology and an essentialist view of human nature, instrumental functionalism has employed elegant statistical strategies for understanding organizational processes. Prediction and control of projected outcomes are sought by carefully calibrating the relevant variables and

testing all conceivable hypotheses. Mainstream empiricism seeks the technical knowledge that enables institutions to operate efficiently, and success depends on creating organizational models that enable managers to achieve company objectives. However, in order to specify the logic and content of institutional accountability in terms of Hocking's positive freedom, we believe that we should adopt the framework of organizational culture.[7]

Organizations are understood as cultures in the sense that their members engage in producing a shared reality. Through organizational symbolism – myths, awards, stories, rites, policy statements, logos, legends, architecture – an institution's practice is exhibited and made meaningful. Whereas traditional research investigates sending-and-receiving networks to make information flows more effective, communication in the cultural paradigm emphasizes the construction and reproduction of symbolic meaning systems. Communication is not simply an organization's technical activity, but it creates and sustains its *raison d'être*.

Organizations, therefore, manifest human consciousness. They are visible expressions of worldviews, organized understandings "of what constitutes adequate knowledge and legitimate activity" (Smirchich, 1983, p. 347). And the metaphors for interpreting these shared beliefs derive from the humanities rather than from the natural sciences, that is, "more and more from the contrivances of cultural performance than from those of physical manipulation – from theater, painting, grammar, literature, law, play" (Geertz, 1983, pp. 22–23). Organizations are to be understood from the ground up and inside out, in terms of the meaning systems that constitute them.

From a cultural perspective, an organization's discourse represents disputes over terrain and authority within organizational subunits. It illuminates corporate loyalty, brand/niche identity, and office drudgery. The workplace, seen in its symbolic form, is a site for fundamental human struggles over the meaning of vocation. And the institutional infrastructure – particularly its technological dimension – is stitched into the conceptual whole. The story, perhaps legendary but linked forever to the Baseball Hall of Fame umpire Bill Klem, has three umpires discussing the famed "strike zone." The first says, "I call them as they are"; the second, "I call them as I see them"; and the third and most insightful says, "They ain't nothin' till I call 'em."[8] The shrewd number three recognizes that language plays a critical role in creating reality. Calling a strike does not merely label an objective event; the umpire's naming makes a player's action interconnect with that overall pattern of meanings we know as baseball.

Humans as symbolic agents construct their realities just like umpires do. This is what we mean by time-and-space existence. Organizations create themselves in similar fashion. In that sense, organizations, by definition, are also intermeshed value systems accountable as moral agents. Dominant power interests do not bring organizations into being *de novo* but coerce, sediment, and redirect an inescapable process for anti-human ends. Stuart Hall (1985) makes the same distinction from a different direction: "It does not follow that because all practices are … inscribed by ideology, all practices are *nothing but* ideology" (p. 103). Thus, social responsibility

theory can insist on the same type of accountable freedom for corporations that Hocking established for humans in everyday life.

A rich notion of positive freedom will resonate in an organization's consciousness only through its symbolic forms. Presuming that institutions constitute their reality through language, narrative forms enable organizations to structure themselves almost *ad infinitum* – toward *laissez faire* freedom, collegiality, profit, responsibility, innovation, quality products, public service, or civic transformation. Because organizational language legitimates particular philosophies of life while excluding others, discourse systems are a primary resource for ensuring that media institutions serve the public interest. The narratives that dominate institutional memory encapsulate a company's value system and create its pattern of compliance or deviance. Stories encapsulate organizational culture. Such narratives are always moral dramas – they make a point, they interpret events in terms of a moral imperative, they animate an ideal.

Organizational discourse anchored to a normative center does not merely solve problems one by one. The moral point of an institutional story, or a prescription from ethical codes, or a CEO's report to stockholders, or a trenchant analysis is trivialized if primarily used to extinguish a fire or to patch a rut in the company road. Banquets upon company milestones, codes of ethics, peer criticism, and congressional hearings fulfill the illusive role of establishing, through dialogically formulated language, an organizational culture of integrity.

The German political economist and sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) was the first to develop a theory of industrial organizations that remains salient today. In a speech to the first Congress of Sociology meeting in Frankfurt in 1910, he argued for studying the news production process rather than the content of the message (Weber, 1976). In that legacy, the Hutchins Commission warned that the press was becoming a concentrated, industrialized, big business enterprise impervious to serving society. Hocking's radical positive freedom as the epicenter of organizational culture engages Weber's theorizing, while negative liberty does not. Weber understood power and authority in terms of a dynamic matrix: organizational instruments mobilize resources and technical expertise into measurable increments of productivity ordered by administrative regulations. Weber realized that bureaucratic systems are technically superior to feudalism, military authority, or handicraft. However, he fretted continually about the stultifying dysfunctions of bureaucratic culture. Weber worried that bureaucratic efficiency would turn oligopolies into iron cages rather than paradise (see Weber, 1946). From his perspective, democratic participation declines in inverse proportion to the expansion and streamlining of the media's infrastructure.

The concentration of media ownership among a very small number of corporate bodies does not necessarily mean that a few powerful owners will directly intervene in the democratic process. The problem is not behavior. The issue is rooted in Weberian bureaucracy – in the stifling, homogenizing manner in which information is disseminated and in the erosion of our epistemic values, from civic transformation toward corporate efficiency rather than civic transformation.[9] As Sheldon

Wolin complains, America's primary institutions, including the traditional mass media, "have become anti-democratic in spirit, design and operation … elitist and managerial" (Wolin, 1981, p. 3). They have become closed, autonomous systems, largely impervious to public influence. The control apparatus in technologically superior news operations is subtly comprehensive; it gets hidden away in operational boxes that seem mysterious and fall outside personal influence. Power is administered in daily doses that are sinister because they seem innocuous.

In this fashion, Weber's worry about bureaucratization as a locus of power came to roost in the news industry, which was taking shape as Hocking wrote. Because technocratic systems recast authority and control, allocating them to impersonal rules, specialized expertise began moving to the organization's center. "The data systems analyst, the marketing specialist, the labor negotiator, the management theorist, and the public relations expert are necessary ingredients in the modern corporate success formula" (Donaldson, 1982, p. 113). In Weber's perspective, though in principle professions have traditionally been bound to a public service altruism, the technocratic professions have been created with the explicit aim of marshaling expertise so as to facilitate bureaucratic efficiency.

Bureaucratized media continue to dominate the news business, and appropriate alternatives must be found while we simultaneously reform their organizational culture. Public broadcasting, for example, warrants vastly more resources and significance than it has ever received since first chartered by Congress. Municipal ownership, city-sponsored independent media centers, or a regional government authority could enable distribution of information regardless of geographic location or income. Film NGOs, underground presses, people's radio, and community theatre provide an alternative system from below. Like the postal service, schools, and public libraries, the mass media are a public resource vital to democratic life.

The media reform movement Free Press understands and acts on Hocking's radical positive freedom, though the movement develops this concept in historical and political economic ways rather than along Hocking's philosophical line. Free Press leaders Robert McChesney and John Nichols see the "bottom-line obsessed, massively monopolized" media enterprise as "increasingly undemocratic" and call for "the establishment of a more diverse and competitive media system" with "a much larger nonprofit and noncommercial component," *à la* Hocking (McChesney & Nichols, 2002, pp. 33, 35). They recognize that the structure of America's media system is the result of government laws and regulatory policies – licenses, tax codes, copyright, media ownership rules, First Amendment protection – therefore the resolution of the issue is not a minimal state and an unfettered industry, but journalism's ability to serve the public good. In *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, McChesney and Nichols (2010) argue that journalism as we know it will not survive without some kind of government support. Believing that journalism is democracy's lifeblood, they contend that the government should grant subsidies to newspapers and media outlets in the same way it did to the printing press when the nation was founded.

Community media are a trend worldwide. Even in the face of comprehensive mass media fortresses, new media technologies are challenging the hegemony of autocrats worldwide. In local and regional settings, emancipated from an insidious adaptation to global technologies, they are the incubators of civic transformation, as the social media proved to be in the Arab Spring. These radical shifts in the size and shape of the technologies themselves are not just a populist's dream. While the jury is still out on the ultimate effectiveness of these technologies, the latter are proving to be vital links in an infrastructure built to desacralize the transnational media grids that barter news as a commodity for sale.

An empowering news, driven by social responsibility, will only occur in the form of occasional fragments on the social landscape, unless there is a fundamental restructuring of the organizational culture within which the news is constituted. Community media that are proliferating all over the world insist that programming be produced by nonprofessionals, that all people and groups of the community have direct access, and that the content be decided by citizens themselves. These media are owned by cooperative-like councils, and policy is set by the members of the community who participate (see Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009, p. 61). Another variant of participatory media is what Clemencia Rodriguez calls "citizens media" (2001). These are local movements of marginal, less powerful people who challenge the exploitations that are a part of everyday life. These movements redefine communication as dialogical, participatory, continually shifting in its language, and nonprofessional. Change happens not in terms of great movements, but through a proliferation of small movements that gradually undermine existing political regimes until simply no one believes in them any more (Christians et al., 2009, p. 61).[10]

The Hutchins Commission report speaks of one feature of socially responsible news as "the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society" (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, p. 26). Through the reform of the media's big business culture and through participatory media, spaces open up for a community's marginal and less powerful members such as youth, ethnic groups, and immigrants. Participatory media structures are proving to be an especially effective way to act on Hutchins' plea for diversity.

Development communication

The negative liberty that Hocking contradicted presupposes mature democracies. Negative liberty speaks against the intervention of a sophisticated judicial order. The concept speaks on behalf of powerful media systems operating in a market economy where the news media are wealthy and strong enough to be considered a Fourth Estate. The logic of negative liberty operates hand in hand with First Amendment constitutional protection for the press. But, in the current era of global media empires, emerging democracies, political upheaval, and dramatic technological change, negative liberty is an inadequate basis for social responsibility. Hocking's radical positive freedom is situated within the human condition rather

than within statehood politics. Social responsibility with positive freedom as its normative core resonates soundly with the diversity, multiculturalism, technological variety, and disjointed politics among the 196 member countries of the United Nations. Hocking's *The Freedom of the Press* speaks more clearly than the report does, wherever mixed media systems – public and commercial – are considered more appropriate than the business model of neoliberalism.

The MacBride Commission

One way to contrast social responsibility in the world today with social responsibility in the post-World War II United States is through the history of the MacBride report, which was published in 1980 under the title *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*. The report serves as a marker for the rapid globalization of media technologies since 1980 and establishes an agenda for media ethics parallel to Hocking's *Freedom of the Press*. In its thoroughgoing defense of press freedom, *Many Voices, One World* understands this concept in the enabling terms of positive liberty. Its recommendations instituted the debates we have had ever since over the economic concentration of media industries worldwide, over the possibilities for democratic politics through the convergence of digital information systems, and over the consolidation of free trade in media products and services under the aegis of the World Trade Organization. Mass communication ethics in terms of issues, participation, and setting – both professional and academic – had passed the international watershed, positive liberty being the axis and negative freedom being quarantined on the margins.

Development journalism

MacBride's international perspective occurred in the context of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debates (see Traber & Nordenstreng, 2002). Development journalism proved to be a significant component of the NWICO discussions, and for more than four decades development communication models have taught us about positive and negative liberty. Early on, development journalism became anchored in monologic, positivistic, technologically oriented media theory. The dominant paradigm in development communication – the mechanistic modernization theory constructed by Wilbur Schramm, Everett Rogers, and Daniel Lerner – promoted a global neoliberal economic order. It advocated a communication theory of behavioral change with an accent on market-oriented solutions and entrepreneurship. The media's commercial concerns led to a situation where the overriding objective in media production was to generate capital by attracting as many viewers as possible – either as consumers or as targets for advertising. Among their failures, the media did not explore non-market solutions. Defining freedom in classical liberal terms uncritically allowed the dominant paradigm with its Western origins to prevail. Negative liberty has no critical leverage against it.

In contrast to the modernization model favoring political and entrepreneurial elites, Hocking leads to a different kind of journalism. Rather than confirming the

market, social responsibility journalism resonates with the movements of people concerned with cultural autonomy and political self-determination. Ideas and plans are not imposed by outside experts, but communities build up their own knowledge and experience through interactive learning. Instead of a top-down approach to problem solving, "the focus is on the grass roots construction of meaning, the generation of common cultural symbols, and projection of a public conception of historical development that evokes wide identification and participation" (White, 1994, pp. 113–114). The role of the state is not to command the efforts of local and regional groups, but to respond to and facilitate their initiatives. Development-oriented news media give people a voice, allowing them to talk and run more of society and then report on the public's life and discussion. Such news media are socially responsible in the fullest sense, responding to the people's concerns rather than to the interests of the governmental elite and powerful nations. Journalists are seen as active community participants committed to understanding the concrete life of their community from the inside out.[11]

Adapted to Chloe Schwenke's review of development ethics, press freedom is a mandate in both theory and practice; but freedom must be understood in the positive tradition or it has no credibility.

> In an age where human prosperity for many people has reached levels unimaginable at any prior time in human history, vast numbers of people around the developing world, and some in the more developed countries as well, must still contend with the moral outrages of poverty, child malnutrition, the widespread incidence of preventable disease, and the deprivation of those qualities we normally associate with the "truly human" life. (Schwenke, 2011, p. 318)

Fulfilling the conditions of freedom is itself a condition *sine qua non*. When journalism operates under conditions of hostility and harassment, positive freedom is indispensable. When indigenous reporting is emphasized rather than controlled by multinational agencies and professionals, positive freedom has salience and negative liberty becomes a foreign concept. Development ethics in and for the global South deals with such norms as "human dignity, social justice, human flourishing, the common good … participation and inclusion" (Schwenke, 2011, p. 319). Whenever it uses the media's social responsibility as the general framework, only radical positive freedom is substantive enough to represent those norms.

For developing countries, the negative liberty model understands the media in business terms, presuming as it does that a press free from government control best serves a country's growth. As this model becomes discredited, the search is on for alternatives that are explicitly international rather than Western and indigenous rather than imported from the global North. In this search, the opposite view of liberty tells us what alternatives to endorse. The multiple freedoms' approach of Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen is one strategy that meets the positive liberty test. Rather than finding economic growth to be development's primary feature, Sen defines development as a process of expanding human freedoms so

that people's lives are more truly human (Sen, 1999). Development theory and strategies are anchored in the moral rather than the legal sphere; ends rather than means are central. Freedom of thought and speech is a priority for the global South, but so is freedom from discrimination, freedom from want, freedom from injustice, and freedom to do decent work. Sen – who, along with Martha Nussbaum and David Crocker, turned this development perspective into an ethical theory known as the human capabilities approach – understands freedom in the tradition of Hocking. As the work of these three researchers demonstrates, their integration of moral responsibility with human freedom is "sensitive to cultural differences while still insisting on a threshold of 'moral minimums'" (Schwenke, 2011, p. 322).[12]

As Hocking contended, when freedom is rooted in philosophical anthropology instead of legal systems and is simultaneously seen as communal, universal, and personal, the result is a healthy society. In this moral pluralism there is a commonness true to our humanity, and there are multiple outworkings of it in time and space. Positive freedom, anchored ontologically, lives off Rousseau's timeless distinction between the empirical will of all and the normative general will. The freedoms of the capabilities approach assume, correctly, that members of a society know the fundamental difference between being morally obligated and being physically coerced – that is, the difference between the common good and the tyranny of majority interests. The multiculturalism this approach produces, borne of an integration of moral universalism with communal accountability, is a pluralism recommended for both the global North and the global South.

Media and democracy

In MacBride's and development communication's broader context – media and democracy – positive freedom is international and negative liberty parochial. Scholars of the global South who theorize the idea of democracy are doing so in the context of transitional societies, that is, young democracies, which contrast with industrial democratic orders. What does press freedom as a political value mean in the former, by comparison with what it means the latter? In the postcolonial period, during the democratic surge on the African continent, the new democracies typically have imported their views of press freedom and responsibility from the West. Though "pressures for economic and political reforms came from both within and outside Africa during the 1980s and 1990s," primarily Western financial institutions and donor countries funded the reform process and controlled it. "External initiators and sponsors of Africa's democratization – the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), donor countries as well as internal media stakeholders and activists – campaigned persistently for a free press," arguing that it was integral to democracy (Rioba, 2012, p. 8). African ruling elites, "desperate to hang on to power, accepted the agenda and funding from the West, on the hope that they would control the process and therefore protect their own interests" (p. 16).

The free press feature of democracy meant a departure from direct control of the media through restrictive laws, but the outcome in Tanzania, after two decades,

has been a media landscape where the threat to press freedom comes not only from the government, but also from the corporate world, which has financial stakes in the communication process and in the communicated products. Political officials themselves are often media moguls, and therefore the government cannot be a legitimate prosecutor or judge, accuser or regulator of media institutions.

The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) was established in Dar es Salaam on June 30, 1995 by journalists and media stakeholders, after protracted struggles with the government's plan to form a statutory council to address increasing unethical tendencies among media practitioners. The argument for rejecting the government's initiative and for choosing a nonstatutory and voluntary MCT was that this move would align the country's media accountability regime with that of liberal democratic reforms, which ushered in free market capitalism and democratic pluralism. Self-regulation is the mantra of press responsibility in negative liberty terms.

The Tanzanian journalist and academic Ayub Rioba (2012) studied self-regulation during the process of democratization in Tanzania in order to understand its efficacy for guaranteeing a socially responsible news media. He concentrated his research on the regulation process spearheaded by the MCT. A content analysis of the cases accumulated over ten years verified that the MCT endorses the status quo, benefiting journalism practice rather than its accountability to the public. Rioba concluded that the free market is no panacea for new democracies. Within that framework, endorsing the MCT's self-regulation and insisting only on administrative tightening is correctly said to ignore commercial media houses and to support an individualistic neoliberalism. Self-regulation as a liberal democratic ideal presupposes a hands-off government that leaves regulation to the market. The media are increasingly serving commercial interests, thereby faltering in their role of promoting and enhancing democracy. The research concludes, legitimately, that self-regulation will continue to be ineffective, similar ethical transgressions being repeated over and over.

Though the liberal paradigm is the dominant normative framework on the postcolonial African continent, Berger (2002) posits that this paradigm is too narrow to be a universal framework outside the global North. "The import of Western notions of liberal democracy into Africa without sufficient interrogation of their relevance and effectiveness continues to invite criticism and the need for further scrutiny into what is best for the continent" (Rioba, 2012, p. 8). Not being integrated into the neoliberal paradigm, Hocking's radical version of positive freedom can continue to stimulate critical thinking about the media's accountability in young democracies such as Tanzania's.

Rather than procedural adjustments to self-regulation, Rioba proposes a transformative democracy instead of Tanzania's imported liberalism, which perpetuates the problems of the colonial period (ch. 13). Western liberal democratic ideals continue to clash with local realities on the ground the same way they did during colonialism. Therefore Rioba concludes that the continent's historical oral culture and its bedrock *ubuntu* worldview must play a vital role in all mediated practices today. In his perspective, governance by the people, which is rich historically

and culturally, has the potential to provide the conditions of freedom: education, non-discriminatory employment, and quality public service media. In the spirit of positive freedom, Rioba proposes a "Media for Democracy" institute for training, media monitoring, research, and reviews of media performance (pp. 174, 200).

While Rioba is wary of draconian laws that do not regulate but control, his research is sophisticated enough in methodology, theory, and history to search beyond self-regulation for possible legal regulations against financial corruption, for protecting privacy, and for serving remote populations.[13] Positive freedom seeks to work in harmony with Africa's communal values rather than in opposition to them. It lays aside *laissez faire* newsroom culture and opens the pathway for young democracies to collaborate carefully and warily with government agencies, to guarantee minimum standards and respect for human rights – with this situation not resulting in a spineless journalism.

Conclusion

For social responsibility to be the normative framework of journalism in the age of global media, its conceptual core ought to be radical positive freedom. Hocking's *Freedom of the Press*, along with all philosophical work on positive freedom from Rousseau through Taylor, gives us conceptual clarity on this phrase. *A Free and Responsible Press* illustrates committee work rather than the philosophical substance of Hocking. Social responsibility with a common good orientation challenges the traditional media to aim for that common good and puts the public on notice to enable the resources for exercising the freedom to attain it.

In addition to meeting the complicated challenges of today's internationalism, Hocking's positive freedom fits more naturally with the media revolutions currently underway – one technological and the other philosophical. While negative liberty is irrelevant to the social media transformation and to the posthuman turn, the social responsibility of the Hocking tradition opens a pathway through them both. Social responsibility with positive freedom as its normative core is proving its relevance at the cutting edge of two major issues in current media ethics.

New technologies provide unusual opportunity for institutional reform. Social media are the dynamo of the Web 2.0: YouTube, Facebook, Craigslist, Groupon, Zynga, Twitter, and Friendster. But, for all its human-focused promise, Web 2.0 has been grafted onto the existing Internet, which since the late 1990s was largely characterized by commercial enterprise.

Facebook is the Web Cinderella of the 2010s, with more than one billion users in 70 languages. At its core, Facebook is a for-profit company that must generate revenue to survive. Hence what it offers is a different product from what might be suggested on the surface. In the light of Hocking's organizational culture, Facebook is an advertising and marketing provider, not just a social network. Its business is advertising. CEO Mark Zuckerberg nurtures a company culture that urges the sharing of more information more often. Facebook's sluggish growth

after its stock market début in May 2012 can only be overcome by growing activity on the site: the more profile data are provided, the more useful Facebook is to its service partners. Facebook's ideology, tailored as it is to expand numbers, is a globe-spanning service that enables new ways of relating to others. The goal of for-profit businesses to create value for shareholders places a constant emphasis on relentless growth. Facebook's public stock offer creates an even stronger incentive for the company to control more and more of the users' data.

In terms of Hocking's corporate social responsibility understood through Facebook's organizational culture, CEO Zuckerberg's controversial position on "single identity transparency" for online users reflects a business view of online privacy (see Kirkpatrick, 2010). It is not Jung's or Goffman's understanding of human sociology and psychology. Zuckerberg has taken a negative stance on whether privacy is still a social norm, claiming disingenuously that Facebook simply follows social norms and has no intention of influencing them. Tech journalist Eliot VanBuskirk got it right when he wrote that

> social networking feels free, but we pay for it in ways that may not be readily apparent. The rich personal data many of us enter into these networks is [*sic*] a treasure trove for marketers whose job it is to target us with ever-increasing precision. (www.wired.business/author/eliotvb/2009/04)

Facebook's organizational culture has no qualms about defining users in its own terms rather than on their own.

The Center for Digital Democracy in Washington, DC is a watchdog agency trying to protect the Internet from commercial domination. This NGO is asking a question from Hocking's legacy: Will advertising networks, digital marketing specialists, and trade lobbying groups shape the new media world, or "will it become a vibrant commercial and non-commercial marketplace for news, information, and other content necessary for a civil society" (www.democraticmedia.org)?

Social media technologies are reorganizing society, and they need a social responsibility concept that is rooted in community to understand and direct them. At a deeper level, artificial intelligence, cyborgs, avatars, and robotics are challenging the distinctiveness of the human species and the tradition of humanocentric ethics. Robert Mejia (2012) analyzes Project LifeLike – the attempt, in the visualization laboratories of various universities, to create a lifelike avatar supported by an intelligent engine, capable of online learning. The world's first self-made cyborg, Steve Mann (professor of engineering at the University of Toronto), wears the EyeTap camera he invented. He experiments with flesh plug-ins and explores new ideas about wearing voice-activated wearable computing (Campbell, 2006, pp. 285–288).[14] David Gunkel (2012) reviews this artifice of intelligent machines and asks whether they should be admitted to the community of moral subjects. Including as he does a third component of positive freedom – that is, the universalism of being – Hocking enters this debate directly, with his anthropocentric appeal beyond community and individual rights.

For Mejia, Project LifeLike's technological innovation is seeking to redefine what constitutes life. He is concerned that this scientific and epistemological analysis of what is known must give way to an ontological investigation. Life is being redefined

> as a data processing entity. … Life ceases to become life, and instead is reconfigured into a potential source of energy (or information) for a technological apparatus. … Humanity, in having sought to author its own creation, ends up producing the mechanisms for its own ontological erasure. (Mejia, 2012, pp. 15–16)

These artifices born of artificial intelligence are said to manifest a form of posthuman identity (Pepperell, 1995). According to Pepperell's *The Posthuman Manifesto* (www.robertpepperell.com/Posthum/cont.htlm/2003), civilization has already entered a posthuman era where "humans are no longer the most important thing in the universe" (Postulate 1.1) and "all technological progress of human society is geared toward the transformation of the human species." "In contrast to the humanist categorization of humanity as distinct from and in control over the natural world, the posthuman chooses to lose part of his or her being in an emerging technological whole" (Campbell, 2006, p. 281).[15]

Mejia observes that the concept of a synthetic self/non-self challenges the traditional ethics of consciousness. The question is whether there can be a meaningful ethics of artificial consciousness. "To be human is to possess a consciousness *a priori*. Artificial intelligence is denied this possibility in advance; rather, consciousness will emerge as a byproduct of design" (Mejia, 2012, p. 24). The historical questions of ethics are, necessary (as always): By whose design? Who will be the judge? The challenge for ethics in the face of artificial intelligence and its offspring is to account for "the shifting ontologies of what it … means to be human" (p. 27).

On the emerging artificial reality beyond human existence, the legacy of positive freedom is uncompromising. The moral life is considered peculiar to the human species. Its conceptual world does not accommodate artificial being and, despite its intellectual thickness, it does not yield to or endorse an ethics of artificial consciousness. The media responsibility of *Freedom of the Press* engages internationalism, whereas a dualism of freedom and responsibility does not. It validates our agenda in media ethics, the importance of corporate morality, development communication, and the social media. However, the jury is still out as to whether basing moral philosophy on the humanist tradition will prove to be a fatal weakness of Hocking's fecund social responsibility concept or whether it will be the direction that media ethics finally takes toward the posthuman phenomenon.

In 1943 business tycoon Henry Luce, publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines, asked his old Yale classmate, Robert Maynard Hutchins, to inquire into the proper role of the media in modern democracies. Upon receiving the report four years later, he turned on his colleague and scorned the report for its superficial logic. Luce spoke for himself and for industry organizations such as the American

Newspaper Publishers Association and others, which saw the report as an opening wedge for government control of the media. Luce's response to *A Free and Responsible Press* reflected the reactions of a defensive owner. Should he have turned to the background document, *Freedom of the Press: A Framework of Principle*, Luce would have had to engage it intellectually over the long-term issue of the media and democracy. Angry dismissal would have been unacceptable. Social responsibility ethics with positive freedom as its normative core was then philosophically sophisticated enough to warrant the attention of ethical theorists, political philosophers, media critics, and reporters; and it remains so now.

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The authors thank Stephen J. A. Ward for his comprehensive review of an earlier draft. For an application of social responsibility theory to journalism codes of ethics, see C. Christians, "Social Responsibility, Corporate Morality, and Codes of Ethics," published in *An Arsenal for Democracy: Media Accountability Systems*, edited by Claude-Jean Bertrand, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2003, pp. 49–62. Hocking's concept of intersubjectivity was originally presented in a paper at the University of Paris' Conference on Media and Responsibility in April 1991, and his "positive freedom" is explained within the Hutchins Commission's work in Nerone (1995, ch. 3).

Notes

1 For a detailed account of Hocking's biography, with particular reference to his work on the Hutchins Commission, see Fackler, 1981, ch. 7.

2 A summary of *Freedom of the Press* is included as an Appendix to *A Free and Responsible Press* (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, pp. 107–133).

3 The Commission on the Freedom of the Press Report (1947) said regarding government control: "If modern society requires great agencies of mass communication, if these concentrations become so powerful that they are a threat to democracy, if democracy cannot solve the problem by simply breaking them up – then those agencies must control themselves or be controlled by government" (p. 5). But that conclusion is prefaced by this one: "Government ownership, government control, or government action to break up the great agencies of mass communication might cure the ills of freedom of the press, but only at the risk of killing the freedom in the process" (p. 2). And the statement – used loosely, to say that the report advocated government control – is followed immediately by this warning: "If [the mass media] are controlled by government, we lose our chief safeguard against totalitarianism – and at the same time take a long step toward it" (p. 5), and a few paragraphs later by this one: "Any power capable of protecting freedom is also capable of endangering it" (p. 7).

4 The Commission understands itself as working within a media revolution. Chapter 3 of Hocking's *Freedom of the Press* (Hocking, 1947: "The Communications Revolution") describes the massive changes in both technological and historical terms.

5 Seyla Benhabib (1992), too, finds intersubjectivity to be a core concept, situating her understanding of it in terms of universals in ethics, even as Hocking's intersubjectivity and universals are comingled; see also Benhabib (2002).

6 Taylor's (2008) definition of positive freedom is widely cited. Positive freedom is an "exercise-concept," which means that a person must be able to act according to his or her highest self. A famous actor who is a drug addict may have negative liberty but not positive freedom.

7 For an elaboration of organizational culture, see Christians, Ferré, & Fackler (1993, ch. 5).

8 Bill Klem, the most influential and accomplished baseball umpire of all time, is well known for saying: "It ain't nothing until I call it." See Bruce Weber (2009).

9 Dennis K. Mumby (1988, p. 5) summarizes why organizational culture has become "a major theoretical rallying point": this would be due to the continuing impact of Max Weber's writings on bureaucracy; the rediscovery of the American symbolic tradition; the impact of European intellectuals like Heidegger, Schutz, Gadamer, and Habermas; and the influence of organizational communication theorists such as Deetz, Pondy, Morgan, Frost, and Dandridge (and see the whole chapter 1 in Mumby, 1988).

10 Rodriquez's most recent book (2011) is an ethnographic study of citizens' media in Columbia. She tells the story of the ways in which people who live in the shadow of armed intruders use community radio, television, video, digital photography and the Internet to shield their communities from armed violence.

11 Nick Couldry (2010) is fundamentally a critique of how neoliberalism and its market rationalities have made it impossible for ordinary citizens to "give an account of themselves" – a process that is fundamental to democracy. As Couldry points out, echoing Hocking's positive freedom: "An attention to voice means paying attention, as importantly, to the conditions for effective voice, that is, the conditions under which people's practices of voice are sustained and the outcomes of these practices validated" (p. 3).

12 Pluralism requires cross-cultural universals to be distinct from relativism. But this universalism cannot be of the rationalistic variety such as typified by Kantianism or utilitarianism, where ethical principles are thought to apply equally and uniformly to all rational beings. Schwenke uses the phrase "minimum universalism" for the non-rationalist alternative, which "accepts some moral diversity but contends that there is a universally valid body of values which can be accepted by people from different moral and religious communities that can be used to judge public policy" (Schwenke, 2011, p. 339). She cites here Dower (1998), while we prefer our own richer protonorm to Dower's "minimum universalism"; but the latter is prominent in the international literature at present and validates the need to theorize universals rather than follow Enlightenment universalism.

13 Rather than expecting governments to insure the resources for positive freedom, as in Europe's social democracies, Mwangi (2010) and others posit that the media in the context of Africa's democratization can only be effective and accountable to the citizenry when they are part of civil society. But Mwangi's conclusion raises the important question whether civil societies on the African continent are strong enough to guarantee positive freedom.

14 Campbell (2006, p. 284) credits Donna Haraway with transforming the cyborg from a science fiction image to a conception of being in her 1991 *Simian, Cyborgs and Women*.

15 For an introduction to the ethical issues in posthumanism, see the special issue of *Explorations in Media Ecology*, *5*(4), 2006 summarized in Christians' response to this special issue (Christians, 2006, pp. 317–320).

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Part III

New Approaches and Reconsiderations

20

Feminist Media Theory

Linda Steiner

Feminism is an emancipatory, transformational movement aimed at undoing domination and oppression. To assert these normative purposes is not to deny its complex and much contested status. Nor does this definition explain what "feminist" modifies in the phrase "feminist media theory." Feminist media history, to take a different example, highlights the development of media established by feminists for feminist audiences, which often embody feminist values. In contrast, the field of feminist media studies deploys feminist principles and politics in researching media processes and organizations, regardless of whether the media content expresses a feminist ethos. Feminist media theory, I argue, relies on feminist theory. That is, it applies philosophies, concepts, and logics articulating feminist principles and concepts to media processes such as hiring, production, and distribution; to patterns of representation in news and entertainment across platforms; and to reception. Unlike approaches that hide their politics, feminist theorizing is explicitly political. It addresses power. The theory's feminist agenda is also manifest in its research aims and methods.[1] Moreover, feminist media theory takes gender seriously – as a factor that structures identity and experiences – without assuming permanent or static gender differences. Instead gender intersects with other dimensions of identity such as race, class, ability, nationhood, and sexual orientation, as well as with the relations of subordination or domination that these categories carry along.

Indeed, precisely because the sex/gender system is socially constructed – naturalized but not "natural" – media issues are central to feminism; much of the controversy within feminism turns specifically on media. Significant changes in media representations of women, many pushed by or produced in response to feminism, have provoked fierce debate. Which representations are progressive,

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which disguised versions of conventional sexism, or even actively anti-feminist? Furthermore, feminist media theory remains largely implicit rather than becoming explicit. It hasn't caught up with the emergence of multiple feminisms and approaches.

The Activist History

To complicate the definitional issue one more time, the field of feminist media studies history arguably begins with Betty Friedan's 1963 attack on popular women's magazines (which were run by men) for their single-minded celebration of the "feminine mystique." The premise of those magazines was the idea that working women were unhappy and neurotic and women can find fulfillment only as devoted housewives and mothers. Such fulfillment required the products sold by magazine advertisers. The feminist media theorist whose pioneering legacy survives most clearly is, however, Donna Allen – not Betty Friedan. A civil liberties and peace activist, Allen was convicted of contempt for refusing to testify before the US House Committee on Un-American Activities (the sentence was overturned). In 1972 she founded the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP). The WIFP's newsletter *Media Report to Women* tirelessly reported on lawsuits against news organizations, challenges of broadcast licenses, and other policy and legal efforts.

A 1977 manifesto by Allen and her daughter Dana Densmore called for inventing a radical and feminist philosophy of communication, "one that is gentle and peaceful, respectful of all people, and politically equal."[2] Women's progress and power required women's media, as well as women working in male-owned media who could correct the latter's distorted, misleading content and its emphasis on violence, conflict, and sex. Allen and her second daughter Martha Leslie Allen identified (and enacted) three principles for feminist journalism: never attack or use words that judge people; privilege facts over opinion ("Conclusions without facts keep us apathetic, powerless to act, and dependent upon the decision-making of others"); and let people speak for themselves, something "male journalism" refused to do.

Inspired by the burgeoning visibility of "liberal feminism" (the idea that irrational prejudice and incorrect stereotypes of women result in their being denied their equal rights), and often supported by the WIFP, scholars and organizations collected empirical data in the 1970s about unrealistic "sex roles" in, or women's absence from, television and film; these quickly filled anthologies and bibliographies (Busby, 1975; Butler & Paisley, 1980; Friedman, 1977). A US Commission on Civil Rights (1977) report documented the stereotyping and under-representation of women and people of color in prime-time television dramas and news. According to the Commission, people of color and women rarely reported news, much less enjoyed leadership positions of media organizations; and this fact resulted in that stereotyping and under-representation. The report showed that a group might both decry its stereotyped representation and complain of invisibility.

Moreover, the report's emphasis on television also explains why television has particular importance, that is, why it matters more than other media:

> [Television] confers status on those individuals and groups … telling the viewer who and what is important to know about. Those who are made visible through television become worthy of attention and concern; those whom television ignores remain invisible. (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1977, p. 1)[3]

In general, again, these content analyses assumed both cause (sexism and, relatedly, women's lack of access to media employment) and effect (the lowering self-esteem of women consumers). Rather brutally refuting the "mythology" of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Marjorie Ferguson (1990) attributed feminists' demands – their demand for better representations of women in the programs' content and for a higher-status representation of women inside media organizations – to their shared beliefs about "increased visibility as a key to greater access, equity, and power" (p. 215). In sum, the central assumption of the early, essentially second-wave, feminist media theory was what could be called the three Rs: depictions of women (and girls) result from, reflect, and reproduce dominant ideologies. Portrayals prescribe and perpetuate roles limited by race/ethnicity, gender, and class; and feminists worried that this causes women to internalize a highly constrained sense of their possibilities and options. Even if women sought nonconventional careers, they would be barred by men.[4] Among the theory's internal contradictions, however, was the argument that women (potentially all women, although women of color were particularly vulnerable to negative and limited stereotyping) were uniformly harmed by such content. Yet the theory also predicted that women hired and promoted by media organizations would produce more "realistic" and "positive" content. The only exceptions here were women in the advertising industry. No advertising women would be able to resist the demand to sexualize and objectify women – often by splitting them into body parts (lips, breasts, legs) for male consumers' pleasure. Either way, in the wake of war-time and post-war fears about propaganda, feminists feared "strong" negative effects.

Promises for realistic and positive images are problematic, independently and in combination. Even if media can mirror reality and "accurately" reflect women (which they cannot), who defines the ideals? Media texts are made in contexts that articulate with the current dimensions of power and ideology, and these are beyond the making of individuals; but such texts remain cultural forms whose meanings are neither real nor unreal but made – constructed (Rakow, 2001; van Zoonen, 1994). And, while this particular insight emerged only later, more nuanced approaches soon began to surface. Gaye Tuchman (1978) applied the concept of symbolic annihilation: The media "annihilated" women through omission, trivialization, and condemnation. Scholars in England, especially the Women's Studies Group (1978) at the University of Birmingham, studied women's cultural experiences; their attention to how cultural spheres are gendered launched still ongoing research on women's genres. Feminist film theorists focused on how structures and narrative

strategies guided cinema spectatorship in gendered ways, thereby constructing "woman" as the Other. Using psychoanalytic theory to explain gendered viewing dynamics, Laura Mulvey (1975) famously described Hollywood's structuring of the male gaze.

As Allen's philosophy shows, much of the early (and also later) work on representations of women in news and entertainment media was quantitative. Scholars counted how many of the lawyers or doctors or police officials on television dramas were women; how many of the heroes on children's television shows were girls; how many of the front-page news makers were women. This preoccupation with counting was largely predicated on crude, albeit well-meant ideas about the detrimental "effects" of such representations, both generally, on social life, and at the individual level, on consciousness. Ironically, some blamed the excessive abstractness of feminist media theory for the paucity of empirical research in this field. Meanwhile, in contrast to those calling for more quantitative empirical work, Tuchman (1979) blamed feminists' obsession with counting on researchers whom Tuchman suspected of being interested in working in the industry, perhaps as consultants. Without defending the counting, Tuchman's accusation hardly seems fair. At a minimum, at a time when feminist research almost never enjoyed funding, the tilt toward quantitative research imitated the scientism of media studies, which in turn imitated the methodologies of social science. Across the board of media studies, scholars were trying to achieve status by collecting reliable numbers. The usefulness of qualitative critique or interpretation was far from obvious. But the reluctance to go beyond quantitative content analysis had its downsides. Even Gallagher (2001b, p. 12) concedes:

> Paradoxically, the resulting overemphasis on manifest content was precisely what weakened activists' bid to influence media policies and institutions. Without an analysis of the underlying forces that conditioned media content, activists could not hope to develop constructive strategies for change.

In any case, there was little effort to engage, much less develop, theory. The National Organization for Women (NOW), founded by Friedan and others in 1966, continues to apply these "naïve" assumptions to mainstream television. In 2002 NOW ran "counts" of content in order to identify the sexist, heterosexist, and racist myths dominating network programs. These include the myth that men run the world and the myth that young, thin, strong, and brave women exploit their sexiness.

Gendered Jobs

An assumption that long dominated feminist media theory was this: if women controlled media production, content would be different and better. This application of "difference feminism" (which rejects patriarchy's devaluation of the feminine to

affirm a positive value) predicts that women running broadcasting and film studios would offer more diverse, creative, and "positive" representations of women. Likewise, women and men publishers and editors would have different management styles and would cultivate a different kind of newsroom environment.[5] Further down the journalism food chain, the claim has been that men report hard news, focus on facts, prefer male sources, and require "objective" detachment. Conversely, women focus on features and on news that are important to or about women, highlight consequences, seek out female sources, privilege audience needs, and have a more contextual ethics. One explanation for this gendered binary was cultural feminism's theory that women have natural talents and skills that are either complementary to or better than men's. Thus women's distinctive communication skills, compassion for others, and empathy rendered them not merely well qualified for media jobs – especially in public relations – but better suited. Romy Frohlich (2004) worried that emphasizing women's inherent approachability and expressiveness (which she attributed to childhood socialization) reinforces gender stereotypes that potentially limit women, confining them to job ghettos. With very few exceptions, however, this "essentialist" theory, largely rejected by other disciplines, was invoked to prod media organizations to hire women.

Historically, these differences between women and men were not particularly difficult to hypothesize when relatively few women made films, directed television shows, or covered sports, especially once we exclude narrowly defined women's programming – such as women's pages or soap operas. But, when more women began to enter television, film, and especially journalism, theorists adopted nuclear physicists' notion of critical mass to explain why women's work was in actuality not so different from men's. Critical mass refers to the quantity that is necessary to precipitate an irreversible turning point (Dahlerup, 2006). In politics and business, which first borrowed the concept, the theory was that "token" women are too isolated to achieve significant organizational change. Once women reporters reached "critical mass," women would get more, and more accurate, coverage. Since 30 percent became the canonical if arbitrary threshold, 30 percent was referenced to justify both hiring and advancing women journalists.

Ironically, critical mass theory led to fears that women's successful incursion into journalism would eventually harm journalism by lowering salaries and thereby pushing out men and by featuring more "soft" content. This downward cycle would turn journalism into a "pink ghetto" (Beasley & Theus, 1988), similar to other "pink-collar" jobs dominated by women –work done by secretaries, nannies, and nurses. The phrase "velvet ghetto" probably fits better for those fields that have a numerical predominance of women, such as public relations. Different reasons have been proposed to explain why women's visibility in a "velvet ghetto" is uncontroversial. Perhaps this is allowed to compensate for women's absence from domains that enjoy higher pay and power. Perhaps men don't want these jobs. Perhaps, as seems to be the case in public relations, women self-select and accept their low status as inevitable (Toth & Cline, 1989). Either way, these become vicious circles, with the decreasing pay and status driving out more men.

Research shows only slight gender differences: Women seem more likely to use a greater diversity of sources, including non-elites and unofficial figures, including women. Even when women comprise more than one third of the journalism staffs, however, large-scale surveys indicate few major differences between men's and women's professional orientations (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996; Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2007).

When women did not approach their journalism work in significantly different ways even after they had attained critical mass, theories began to reference the impact of women's absence from executive suites. Senior leaders can affect media organizations' values and priorities, so change requires women at the top, willing and able to buck male norms and to create a new workplace culture. But, scholars suggested, a glass ceiling – an invisible but impenetrable barrier – artificially blocks women's promotions into management and executive positions. Over time, the number of women in management position has only slightly increased. US journalism confirms the pattern found in other professions – namely that significantly more men than women managers have children at home. This suggests that women have difficulty in combining family and work. Some small studies – for example, one regional paper with even numbers of women and men as executives and reporters, and another one with less balanced numbers – suggest small differences; those were attributed to how dominant groups can reproduce and naturalize their ideologies in their professional socialization, norms, training, and routines. But, more often, women "gatekeepers," even when they enjoy critical mass, do not consistently make news decisions on the basis of gender, undermining claims that powerful women in newsrooms will end the masculine bias of news (Beam & DiCicco, 2010; Bleske, 1991).[6] Meanwhile, journalism's declining status and pay result more from cynicism about news media and from the popularity of social media and citizen journalism than from women's presence.

In another variation, the "topping-out factor" posits that change only comes from the very top ranks, while women get stuck in middle management. But, so far, women media moguls are unsurprisingly like their male counterparts. Ferguson (1990) demolished what she called the "feminist fallacy" that women who achieve high rank, influence, or power will be feminists, be they the queen of England, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, or a national tabloid editor:

> Following the minority reference group argument, these editors, uncertain of their power and status in a predominantly masculine domain, have not risked challenging the professional ideology and commercial success … . The measure of their success is gauged in circulation and male peer esteem, not by standing up for the sisterhood. (Ferguson, 1990, p. 225)

The same could be said of Rebekah Brooks, the recently disgraced News International CEO. On the other hand, these debacles, as well as the journalists who hype "wars" between stay-at-home moms and working mothers, probably say little about women's efforts to become "honorary males." Rather, running

exaggerated stories about women and about conflicts among women is what short-sighted editors do to maintain circulation, build advertising revenue, and please stockholders.

An alternative way to explain journalism's continued adherence to old conventions re-invokes "maleness." In this narrative, male culture in the newsroom – not the behaviors or the beliefs of individuals – accounts for the relative paucity of women in higher posts as well as for the continuation of the norms and routines that standardize the news. The organizational theorizing of the 1970s sees media organizations in terms of some combination of professional beliefs or behavior, structural and organizational values, and ideological and economic agenda. According to Liesbet van Zoonen (1998), women embrace a different ethics:

> Female journalists feel they show more respect to their readers and their readers' needs than do their male colleagues. They also scorn the detachment and insensitivity in many of their male colleagues, believing they are hiding behind the idea of objectivity to exclude all compassion and humanity that one should bring to journalism. (van Zoonen, 1998, p. 36)

Others see journalism as masculine in enshrining specific workplace practices such as a 12-hour working day and in ranking entertainment as 'inferior' to information (Robinson, 2005). Even as women journalists distance themselves from the notion that they "do" journalism differently from men – partly to protect themselves from ideological accusations that they push a feminist agenda – they may essentially be forced to write or report in a way that editors believe will appeal to women (Chambers, Steiner, & Fleming, 2004). Women make themselves into women writers, or allow themselves to be made as much.

New Gender Theories

Gender increasingly refers, not to a dichotomous set of "natural" differences, but to a relational act. Men and women perform gender, with differing degrees of creativity, and provoke others to perform gender. As Judith Butler (1990) provocatively asserts, identities do not express some authentic core self; they are the effect (not the cause) of performances. Butler refuses to treat women as a group with shared characteristics and interests. Butler wants to dismantle and deconstruct the "subject" of women, and to resist the reification of an inescapable, binary view of gender. She calls for subversive "gender trouble" and for the proliferation of genders.

In putting gender at the intersection of complex historical, material, cultural, and social conditions, feminist standpoint epistemology is particularly useful as the basis for understanding gender performance in media work. One of the most prominent standpoint epistemologists, Sandra Harding (1993, 2004) says that the knowledge claims of dominant groups are distorted and partial, because those in

dominant classes cannot question their own biases; they want their knowledge claims to remain opaque so that their power and status may remain naturalized. In contrast, because marginalized people must understand their oppressors, they ask better questions and they listen carefully.[7] The standpoints of the subjugated are neither innocent nor exempt from reexamination. Nonetheless, starting off thought from the experiences of various groups of women and marginalized people therefore offers greater likelihood of more accurate descriptions and richer explanations, although such "situated knowledges" are still partial. Applied to journalism, this suggests that, to the extent that women and men live different lives, they bring different experiences to their jobs as journalists and approach news differently. Thus far, the rare instances when standpoint epistemology has been applied to media practice are confined to the hypothetical (Durham, 1998), but it could be highly productive in promoting a feminist ethics for the media.

Relatedly, black feminists offer intersectionality to highlight how multiple social dimensions are interdependent and interlocking. Race, class, and gender simultaneously impact one another. Oppression based on these identity factors reflects the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, what Patricia Hill Collins (1990) calls the matrix of domination. Describing representational intersectionality, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991b) shows that controversies over popular representations of women of color can elide women's particular location and thus result in disempowerment. While disputing the claim that rappers are entitled to be misogynistic, Crenshaw (1991a) criticized a court decision for ignoring cultural context when it found the sexually explicit lyrics of 2 Live Crew obscene. Mutually constructing vectors of social inequality and domination were similarly cited to explain the addition of the post-feminist "angry black woman" to the canon of archetypes of black women (mammy, jezebel, matriarch, and welfare queen, among others) (Springer, 2007). Intersectional theorizing on sexuality, however, has largely ignored women of color, sexual minorities, people marginalized by physical or cognitive (in)ability, nor does this work consider how both nationality and geography and media also enter the equation. Intersectionality has seen little empirical application – not nearly as much as one might expect – even in third-wave scholarship (discussed below), whose attention to intersectionality is observed more in the breach than in regular practice. With rare exceptions, we feminist media scholars study ourselves and assume the validity of our research interests, failing to bring intersectional identities to the fore.

Emerging feminist theories about femininity have likewise inspired thinking about masculinity, since patterns of masculinity and femininity are often socially defined in contradistinction to some model of the "Other." Masculinity and femininity each have changed, including as they are represented in media content, but scholars continue to treat them dichotomously, as opposites. The concept of hegemonic masculinity that Robert Connell (e.g., 1987, 1995) first proposed drew (*inter alia*) on feminist theories of patriarchy, the role of men in transforming patriarchy, psychoanalysis, and, of course, Antonio Gramsci's notion of how classes are mobilized or demobilized in active struggles for dominance. Connell defined

hegemonic masculinity – as opposed to other (subordinated) masculinities – as the *currently* most honored way of being a man. That is, various forms of masculinities come into existence in specific historical circumstances; what is currently hegemonic masculinity has displaced older forms but eventually will itself be displaced. Moreover, given that hegemonic masculinity is normative, not statistically normal, it merely requires men to position themselves in relation to it, not actually achieve it. Ideologically speaking this legitimates patterns that enable men's dominance over women. Men who benefit from patriarchy without enacting a strong version of dominance, Connell added, show "complicit" masculinity.

Media scholars have eagerly applied the concept, first in sports and war imagery (Messner & Sabo, 1990). In particular, film scholars grounded spectatorship and masculinity in historical context. For example, the ideal of masculinity exemplified by actor Douglas Fairbanks was challenged by both matinee idols like Rudolph Valentino, whose appeal to women derived from his sexual ambiguity, and Lon Chaney, whose grotesqueness appealed mainly to men (Hansen, 1991; Studlar, 1996). These changing notions of masculinity during the American jazz age responded to multiple social and sexual dilemmas, including threats from new immigrants and perceived threats from "new women"; both of these groups were seen as rejecting sexual and domestic norms. Sophisticated feminist media theorizing about boys and men – from the cinematic metrosexuals to reality shows' gay men – continue to highlight contesting versions of contemporary masculinity. Men's genres may function specifically as sites through which men resist challenges to male power. Whether the new men of the 1980s, some of them sensitive and others simply emasculated, constituted a reaction to feminism ("blokelash") is under debate. Yet there is general agreement that magazine texts, photography, and advertising directed at new, style-conscious and consumption-oriented men are responding to social and cultural changes, including in gender relations and in feminism (Beynon, 2002; Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1996).

Polysemy, Power, and Policing

New understandings of previously marginalized media genres as potentially healthy and certainly valuable to study depend on audience/reception theory as developed in British (and then American) cultural studies. Charlotte Brunsdon and David Morley (1978) emphasized how audiences can produce "negotiated" or even oppositional readings. Borrowing from literature, anthropology, and women's studies, feminist media scholars developed and invented theories, concepts, vocabulary, and methods to study women's genres, to figure how women actively took pleasure in forms such as romance novels and soap operas and how women intentionally fitted these forms into their lives. Scholars reluctantly abandoned the argument (and justification for research) that patriarchal ideology causes sexist content, and thus sexist behavior. They gradually moved toward more complex models of spectatorship that, if nothing else, recognized that

audiences and scholars do not always read texts in identical ways. Feminists insisted that women too are creative and active meaning makers – no less so than men. With the shift to cyberspace, girls are getting similar recognition as well.

Janice Radway's (1984) study of how romance novel readers interpret the plots "against the grain" remains a model for taking seriously audiences who enjoy "bad" popular culture. Indeed feminist scholars' respect for soap opera fans and fashion magazine devotees met with enormous hostility, first because these were women's genres (Hobson, 1982; McRobbie, 1991, 1994). Later on feminists debated whether these genres exploited women as cultural dupes, but the earlier suggestion that fans actively alternate between critique and involvement was enormously productive. At the same time as she criticized women's popular culture scholarship for uncritically reconstructing dominant gender discourse, Liesbet van Zoonen (1994) challenged Radway's authority to make judgments about her subjects and to value only the potential for feminist revolution. Radway (1986), however, asserted her responsibility to offer second-order interpretations of her subjects' accounts in order to identify and unravel the "ideological seams" in her subjects' practices; this could help women "understand their actions and selves in a new way" that might "create a space for intervention, for political action" (pp. 107, 114). Preferring genre approaches, US feminist film scholars have only rarely focused on audiences (Bobo, 1995). Television, however, has generated many reception studies (Press, 1991).[8] Unfortunately, Radway's point about the book itself – how women used the act of reading to secure a measure of privacy and personal space, apart from their families – has been elided. This crucial aspect deserves much more attention.

Celeste Condit (1989) offered an important correction to theorizing about textual polysemy and the freedom of audiences to dismiss "preferred" readings. She reserved "internally polysemous" or "open texts" for discourses offering unstable or internally contradictory meanings. "Intertextual polysemy" refers to the variety in media messages available and "polyvalence" describes how audiences evaluate and value texts differently. Nevertheless, Condit emphasized how complex media constructions could be liberating: "Rather than portraying the mass media as the channel of oppression generated through the top-down imposition of meanings, such a perspective allows for the suggestion that the pleasures of the popular media might in fact be liberating" (Condit, 1989, p. 104).

The argument about empowered women actively making meaning is more difficult regarding advertising, which is inherently about manipulation, and which has long used women and sex – sometimes overtly and sometimes in more coded ways – for selling. With few exceptions (Dove's "real women" campaign), feminists have criticized advertising, including its contemporary shift to independent, sexually powerful women. Myra Macdonald called advertising's postmodern, post-feminist playfulness "a ruse of consumerism anxious to revitalize worn myths" (1995, p. 221), although she conceded that this may also encourage women to play with their identity. Different theories emerged, especially after the 1990s, when media industries and their advertising and marketing arms responded to (or co-opted)

feminist criticisms, trading on liberal feminists' platform about women's freedom to please themselves, reward themselves, and pursue their interests on their own terms. Wholly inverting the second-wave mantra about making the personal political, feminist goals were revised to turn on personal desire. Referring to advertising of products targeted at young women – products such as cleavage-enhancing bras – Rosalind Gill (2007) attributes the mid-1990s' discourses about freedom, choice, and "girl power" to a combination of new communication technologies, a youth raised on computer games and music television, feminism, many women's anger at unattainable images of femininity, women's increasing financial independence, and the growing confidence of media-savvy consumers. Together, these factors forced advertisers to rethink how to attract women consumers.

Post-structuralists such as Foucault, Derrida, or Kristeva are important here for their rejection of both reductive dualisms and universally shared frameworks and for their emphasis on geographic and historical context. In particular, Foucault's theory of disciplinarity is crucial for suggestions that discourses of femininity produce a subordinated, "subjected and practiced" body, and thus operate through a larger discipline: "This system aims at turning women into the docile and compliant companions of men just as surely as the army aims to turn its raw recruits into soldiers" (Bartky, 1990, p. 75). As a post-structuralist, Gill (2007) highlights how, in addition to "compulsory individuality," "compulsory sexual agency" is now required. While it avoids positioning women as passive objects of the male gaze, this new emphasis on women's sexual agency may again act as a technology of discipline and regulation: Feminine subjectivity is remolded to fit the post-feminist, neoliberal demand that young women should be beautiful, sexy, and always up for sex – perhaps even as the aggressors. Subjectification is still sexualization, but it is based on self-policing and self-regulation. Indeed advertising has historically played this role. Deploying the theory that a woman's body is a cultural and political "battleground" needing to be disciplined and made attractive, Melissa McEuen (2010) describes how the US government and advertising agencies together marshaled women to support World War II. Advertisers neatly combined war propaganda with selling products to help women workers be sexy, clean, soft-skinned, and sweet-smelling.

Post-Feminist and Third-Wave Discourse

The claim that advertisers incorporate feminist ideas, potentially (re)packaging feminism to neutralize or domesticate it, must be understood in the context of larger concerns about dramatic and mutually interacting changes in media operations, in gender roles, and in feminism itself. These all require new theories. Notably, new labels in feminism are used in different ways; whether the labels are snide or appreciative partly depends on who is using them. Some reject the notion that feminism can be historicized in terms of distinct periods or waves; second-wave feminists do not see themselves as "history," much less as dead.

Nonetheless, taking these terms in the best possible sense, third-wave feminists, who came of age in the 1980s and 1990s, emphasize intersections of gender with multiple dimensions of identity, most prominently sexuality and queerness, although conventional anchors are also included. Post-feminists, meanwhile, claim that women are empowered, at least in terms of individual choices about sex, marriage and family life, work, and life styles – and also as audiences.

Post-feminism is used in contradictory and ambiguous ways, but ways that are always loaded and highly contested; simultaneously liberating and repressive, post-feminism both produces and obstructs social progress (Projansky, 2001). Gill (2007) treats post-feminism as a distinctive sensibility, albeit one connected to neoliberal ideas and values. Among its features are the notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; a requirement for self-surveillance, monitoring, and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice, and empowerment; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference. This, then, is a different theory of the cause and result of the makeover paradigm – different, that is, from the psychological effects frame that surrounded discussions of the ideal body type, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, when mediated depictions of thin, big-breasted women were theorized as causing low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and eating disorders among women and as setting off frantic efforts to meet male standards (see Cash & Pruzinsky, 2004).

Either way, media are at the center of the debate. Post-feminism and changes in feminisms and in the media are interrelated; feminists of all kinds have complicated relationships with the media – relationships that are enormously different in their orientations to these media and uses of them. Third-wave feminists and post-feminists alike ridicule second-wave feminists as anti-sex in the bedroom and in their media preferences. Ironically, not all anti-pornography feminists of the 1970s expressed the same hysteria about sex, or the same "hard-line" theories of pornography (Bronstein, 2011). Illustrating how feminist and gender theories were at stake, some activists rejected the claim that pornography causes misogynistic violence; instead they worried that "softer" mainstream pornography socializes both sexes to internalize harmful stereotypes. While the political economy of pornography seems obdurately to favor white men, these more nuanced responses to pornography also invite reconsideration of pornography as empowering for sexual minorities as audiences. For their part, second-wave veterans now blame media producers and media content for exploiting post-feminism in order to co-opt, if not cannibalize, feminism's language of choice and empowerment, that is, to commodify the new generation and sell an oppressive, shallow illusion of women's progress. These second-wavers accuse the news media and popular culture (whose producers, they suspect, are smarter, but essentially still sexist) of creating an anti-feminist backlash, of presenting feminism as prissy, dead, unnecessary, or even pernicious. Although arguably the very question of a backlash against feminism acknowledges the historic power of feminism, Susan Faludi called that backlash "at once sophisticated and banal, deceptively 'progressive' and proudly backward" (1991, p. 12).

A similar controversy emerges around girls' popular culture, especially girls' use and production of weblogs, zines, and social media. Girl culture has long been marked by a tension: Are girls, presumably more than boys, vulnerable to sexist gender scripts? Or do they read mass culture magazines, television shows, and films inventively (McRobbie, 1991)? Again, on one hand, critics complain that women's heterosexuality remains constructed in popular culture from within the context of masculinity, thereby preventing young women from enjoying sex on their own terms. Yet others find that, at least within their own fanzines, blogs, and websites, third-wave feminists enact agency: They engage in "unregulated" dialogue and define sexual desire for themselves. At the very least, girls can laugh off (hetero) sexist scripts about attracting boys. Karras (2002) says that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s "girl power" inverts conventions of action-adventure, science fiction, and horror genres; the relationship between the perfectly accessorized, third-wave feminine killing machine ("the prototypical girly feminist activist") and her mother symbolizes the tortured, mutually critical relationship between the third and the second wave.

Television has provoked the most emphatic but contradictory claims, perhaps because post-feminism's depoliticized treatment of empowered women consumers translates well into television. Bonnie Dow (1996) criticized prime-time (post-) feminism for its narrow focus on white, middle-class, heterosexual professional women. More to the point, it celebrates women changing themselves, not society. It inverts feminism, not making the personal political but making the political personal. Clearly referring to Ien Ang's (1989) study of Dallas fans, Tania Modleski (1991) postulated a syllogism: "I like Dallas; I am a feminist; Dallas must have progressive potential" (p. 45). Appealing to audience's pleasures in forms like soaps and emphasizing resistance to mass culture's manipulations, Modleski warned, risked ignoring how even cultural analysts may be duped by patriarchy. Such warnings notwithstanding, Lisa Johnson claims that third-wave media theories, even in their moments of "euphoric fandom," avoid facile generalizations about oppositional gender scripts. The blurb for Johnson's (2002) collection explicitly rejects the "sober, near-pessimistic trend in much feminist media studies" and promises a third-wave take on what US television channels "offer today's feminist fan."

Sex and the City (SATC) and other HBO (Home Box Office) shows, in particular, have generated extensive critique. SATC is admired for producing ambiguity and ambivalence about the dilemmas and binary constructions facing sexually active working women and even inviting ironic or oppositional readings of its politics. Others emphatically bemoan its anemic version of subversiveness and depoliticized consumerism (see Akass & McCabe, 2004). In Johnson's (2002) view, HBO shows expose sexist and classist biases; reveal the social construction of masculinity; celebrate the aging female libido; and reject definitions of mothering as both saintly and confining. Nonetheless, only HBO's white middle-class (or wealthy) women – the target "demographic" most likely to afford premium cable channels – can make such choices about pregnancy and children. So intersectionality is marginalized

or ignored. More importantly, the denial that audiences can ever be manipulated should raise suspicions. After all, the theories of academic "feminist fangirls" about the pleasures of consuming reality shows, "chick lit," and "chick flicks" remain either hypothetical or self-generated. The new scholars have largely abandoned the admittedly difficult work of seeing which audiences really do take pleasure in – or are offended or alienated by – which forms.

Global Studies and Political Economy

Already in 1977, Noreene Janus warned that studying sexism apart from its social context (including mode of production and political structures) leads to superficial and misdirected research. Most research still focuses on content, presumably because scholars can address it how and when they want, largely ignoring both institutional contexts and the particularities of reception. Feminists' concerns are rarely incorporated into materialist approaches (Steeves & Wasko, 2002). Even fewer scholars have managed this difficult triangulation such that the economic constraints, technological structures, the organizational culture are all factored in.

The exception proving the rule is Julie D'Acci's (1994) complex examination of how Cagney and Lacey – a television police procedural featuring women – came to be produced; this examination includes some high-level power contests among the producers. In recent years, however, sophisticated studies of production practices have highlighted the overdetermining impact of a nexus of organizational, structural, technological, and economic factors. In particular, feminist production research underscores the distinctions between above-the-line and craft labor (Banks, 2009). Mary Kearney (2011) cannot say whether audiences saw the (highly staged) eroticized catfights among women roller derby competitors on a short-lived reality show the same way she did. Nonetheless, her interviews with the "docu-soap" producers and analyses of advertising and marketing help explain why the unruly "Rollergirls" on the A&E Network were reframed as a pre-feminist "hot babes."

Consistent with how more generally feminism is becoming more self-conscious about its Western bias, becoming and more attentive to the non-Western world, the next step was taking media theory global. Concerns that stereotypes of women inculcate social/cultural values and sex-appropriate roles and behaviors precipitated the global monitoring of women's media employment and of women's media content (see Gallagher, 1999, 2001a), as well as efforts to enlarge the concept of human rights so as to recognize women's rights. By the early 1990s the debate was healthy around the world, having been stimulated by several United Nations World Conferences on Women as well as by other international and regional conventions. In 1995 feminist activists, researchers, and media professionals participated in the first global media monitoring day, to document women's exclusion from television, radio, and print news stories in 71 countries. The results were not surprising or theoretical: The "insight" was that monitoring is an easy

but important way to support reciprocity between action and research, to involve women, and to alert media professionals, "stimulating them to think about gender as a factor in the choices they make and the representations they produce" (Gallagher, 2001b, p. 14). Even more countries participated in monitoring in 2000 and in 2005; the efforts turned up little change.

Feminist media research has become increasingly global, intent on eliminating global injustice and inequalities – even as it understands that all women do not suffer the same kinds or extents of inequalities. Feminist media theories and the entire field of feminist media studies are increasingly explicit about the importance of international and multidisciplinary work seriously addressing media convergence and globalization. Transformation and reform, to the extent that we can agree on what these look like, are progressing unevenly at best. Micky Lee (2006) urges a global feminist political economic analysis of women's control and ownership, or lack thereof, of broadcast and new information technology industries, including how gender naturalizes ideologies of wealth concentration, access to materials, to goods and services. Meanwhile transnational/class issues are understudied barriers to feminist activism, research, and theorizing.

Annabelle Sreberny (2001) persuasively argues that technologies such as satellite broadcasting and the Internet should be foregrounded in discussions of globalization, including how globalizing and integrated global markets have disparate impacts, not merely in terms of the conventional North/South divisions, but also by generation, color, and gender. She sees the concept of development now embracing gender and social issues, so that development no longer refers only to economic growth but includes various measures of empowerment. But feminists have not yet fully acknowledged that, in practice and in theory, calls for global unity and solidarity are at odds with recognition of local culture and politics. Feminists have not yet tackled what universalism means, or the extent to which feminist theorizing applies outside the West. For the most part, around the world, feminist scholars seem to be using versions of theories originating in the West. Globalization impacts political economy, but questions of control and ownership are too often treated separately.

Technology

Enthusiasm for new media content and forms seems to have displaced gendered analyses not only of the impact of power and money on media production, distribution, and consumption, but also of how uses of technology itself can be gendered. Perhaps more to the point, feminist theorizing about technology tends to privilege how women try, more and less successfully, to adapt technologies – cell phones, palm pilots, software – to their own uses, whether in the West or among activist and indigenous groups. Yet, as in journalism, advertising, and film or television production, women's involvement in Internet technologies, even as programmers, does not guarantee systems that are "friendly" or accessible to women.

Nor does it ensure that enough attention will be paid to women's issues. More controversially, Lee (2006) says that focus on women's difficulties in using technologies and in working in information communications technology (ICT) industries ignores how men have invented and distributed technologies for some problematic purposes, such as to help corporations expand locally and globally. Lee says the emphasis on women's difficulties and unease with technologies represents valid fear of the systems of knowledge legitimized by the institutions, although it is usually taken to show a silly kind of fear of the objects themselves. Certainly most feminist studies treat consumption as a cultural activity, tacitly accepting the persistent association of women with consumption and of men with production, and ignoring economic and monetary dimensions. But the technological context of reception is also underplayed and understudied. How does it matter that one reads a printed women's magazine, or essentially the same content on a zine complete with hyperlinks? What is the difference between watching pornography in a four-wall theater and watching it at home, from a pay-per-view channel, or on VCR and/or DVD, perhaps with the bonus features? What fits, or does not fit, with the quotidian experiences of modernity?

One concern has been whether the Internet, no less in its Web 2.0 incarnation, provides the decentralized, open, democratic sensibility and structure that was originally promised everyone and continues to be touted. Alternatively, in keeping with its masculine roots, is it (or is it perceived to be) hostile to women? This is such a huge, evolving, and growing area that theories are quickly proffered and withdrawn, so no specific research will be mentioned here. Suffice it to say that the record is mixed. Some domains remain geeky male preserves. On the other hand, although we must not overstate the case, the gender divide seems to be easing not only for the US millennial generation, but also for people in other generations and in other social and geopolitical locations. Gender differences are not inherent to technology per se, and in domestic and personal spheres as well as in many work domains women use many technologies. Women seem to use some social media as much as, or even more than, men. Clearly many women's activist and niche organizations have migrated to the web, as have their communications. The shift has produced considerable financial savings, although the overall impact is unclear. Producing streamed radio, YouTube, blogs, and zines neither requires nor encourages collaboration and community. Still, cyberspace seems open to both feminist and feminine uses.

"Alternative" media in particular demonstrate even more clearly than the postfeminist blogger sites the feminist potential of technology for helping to challenge dominant representations and, better, for allowing women to constitute counterpublic spheres in the sense Nancy Fraser (1997) described. Efforts to prove either how women are victimized and stereotyped by popular culture content or how women audiences use media content for their own agendas so long dominated discussion of media studies that feminists' collective efforts to use media to create new versions of womanhood were sidelined. Historical studies of social movements (dress reform, suffrage, birth control, sexual minorities) rarely try to generate

theory, but this is a fruitful arena. Around the globe women creatively use communication technologies to provide journalistic counter-narratives about feminism, to experiment with new identities, to build and bolster their communities, to solve large and small-scale problems, and sometimes simply to master and play with technology. In particular, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, and intersexed (LGBTQI) communities – whose agendas have long intersected with feminism – not only recode the polysemous content of "mainstream" media but reconstruct and revalue their identities in their own media. All of these activities offer crucial insights for this body of theorizing. Questions needing to be asked include: What is necessary (in terms of resources, training/experience) for these efforts to serve social movements? Do particular platforms, technologies, or organizational structures work better for certain purposes (say, a sense of community as opposed to attracting new converts)? How do race, generation, and politics matter here?

Other Factors, Other Conclusions

Several other highly interrelated institutional vectors are important to the development of feminist media theorizing. These include the gradual but pronounced ability of feminist scholars to find homes in both women's studies and media and journalism programs, with increasing visibility and rank. Relatedly, mainstream journals and scholarly societies are increasingly open to this research. Moreover, new venues specifically for feminist media research have emerged, such as national organizations, conferences, and publishing imprints. Beginning in 1975, with *Signs*, several general feminist journals were launched,[9] as were journals specific to communication and media, from *Women's Studies in Communication* in 1977 to *Feminist Media Studies* in 2001. As a result, feminist scholars of every ilk can provide and benefit from feedback and encouragement.

Finer-grained theories are still necessary to guide more sophisticated work on the relationship of texts, institutions, and audiences in ways that account for non-dichotomous, intersectional identities and circumstances and that credit audiences' creativity without exaggerating it. Sophisticated feminist theorizing is needed that, whether or not gender is at the center, can point to more equitable media systems, where more people can participate and speak for themselves, and even professionally-produced "mass" representations can avoid exploitative images. Rakow (2001) eloquently advocates new systems of creating representations of women that would sustain participatory democracy. Echoing Donna Allen, she calls for speech to be "freed" so we can represent ourselves: "[E]ach must have 'voice,' the right to speak and to be heard, to represent one's self and one's perspectives, to be part of the political decision-making processes" (Rakow, 2001, p. 44). The goal is to generate ideas that make sense out of these contradictions without undermining or de-radicalizing feminist critiques. That is, the challenge is to incorporate these critiques into theory that will continue to serve the ongoing

interventionist purposes of feminist media research. Given feminism's transformative ambitions, more work is necessary in order to develop theories, concepts, and language that are meaningful to policy makers and to citizens and link feminist media scholars and activists in their efforts to "empower" people to understand, consider, assess and critique the media content they produce and/or consume in ways that make for greater social justice and minimize unfair discriminations.

Notes

1 As a result, in practice it is usually produced by feminists.
2 All these documents are available on the WIFP website at www.wifp.org/
3 A 1979 Commission update insisted even more emphatically that television's "encompassing" nature and capacity for fixing images in the public mind necessitate avoiding stereotypic and demeaning depictions and thus require diversity among decision makers and journalists.
4 This is different from Ramona Rush's (2004) "ratio of recurrent and reinforced residuum." Rush asserts that, because of systemic discrimination at multiple levels, women always and everywhere get what is left over: one quarter to one third of symbolic representation and salary.
5 For more on how theories and concepts have been used to explain the operations of gender in professional media practice, see Steiner, 2012.
6 Women tend to produce intensive, small-scale projects finding gender differences; men or "mixed" teams tend to produce projects, often large-scale, that find no or few differences.
7 Early on Harding and other standpoint epistemologists asserted that women's lived experiences gave them a "privileged vantage point" inaccessible to men (see Hartsock, 1998).
8 See Lotz and Ross (2004) on why feminist television critics were more interested in popularity, industrial issues, and commercial viability than film critics were.
9 For example, *Women's Studies International Quarterly* (1978), *Feminist Review* (1979), and *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* (1979).

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21

Media, Communication, and Postcolonial Theory

Shanti Kumar

Communication studies and postcolonial studies exist in a rather ambivalent relationship, as two very distinct yet overlapping disciplinary formations. Both disciplines are centrally concerned with the study of language, communication, and culture in specific contexts. But very rarely do scholars in communication studies deal with theories from postcolonial studies – and vice versa. One of the more notable exceptions – at least from the perspective of communication studies – is the August 2002 issue of *Communication Theory* on postcolonial perspectives in communication studies. In the lead essay, Raka Shome and Radha S. Hegde argue that "the politics of postcoloniality is centrally imbricated in the politics of communication" (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 249). Yet they find that postcolonial theory has for most part been ignored in communication studies, even as the turn toward cultural studies has brought issues of postcoloniality to the forefront in media and communication studies. Similarly, scholars in postcolonial studies very rarely emphasize the study of communication or mass media, even though mass media, like radio and television, have been historically central to the creation, sustenance, development, and sometimes dissipation of modern nation-states in the postcolonial world.

In what is, as Shome and Hegde claim, the first special issue on postcolonial theory in a major journal on communication theory in the United States, this introduction and the subsequent articles clearly demonstrate that concepts from postcolonial theory have become more integral to communication theory, particularly in relation to the growing importance of "contexts" in the study of globalization of media in recent years. The contributors argue that postcolonial theory is of greater relevance to communication theory because it introduces and develops a matrix of interrelated concepts like otherness, subalternity,

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marginality, and hybridity, which are central to the terms and arguments shaping current debates about the globalization of communications, cultures, and identities – in Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, and so on. However, as they point to the productive tension between communication studies and postcolonial studies, Shome and Hegde highlight the unique role that postcolonial theory has performed – and continues to perform – in the humanities and the social sciences. Postcolonial theory, they write, "by the very nature of its commitment and content exists as an interruption to established disciplinary content that was, and continues to be, forged through structures of modernity and histories of imperialism" (p. 251). This is particularly relevant for communication studies, Shome and Hegde argue,

> especially when we begin to historicize the field and link its emergence with a particular historical moment in the United States – the capitalism of post World War II America when the United States' position as a new world power was on the rise. (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 251)

As Lawrence Grossberg (2002) notes in his Postscript to this same volume, communication studies – not unlike postcolonial studies – has always been an interdisciplinary formation, drawing from a variety of disciplines like sociology, anthropology, history, political science, linguistics, and literary theory (to name a few). At the same time, communication theorists across these traditional disciplines have all had to grapple with questions of contextuality – be it in the positivist mode of model building, in the sociological traditions of the Chicago School, in European linguistics, or in Canadian political economy. After all, communication theorists have always been acutely aware that, at its most fundamental level, communication can occur only in specific contexts. However, Grossberg argues that communication theorists have not been able to deal with questions of contextuality in productive ways because they have been hampered by many assumptions that the discipline of communication has inherited from a variety of Euro-American philosophical traditions. Among the philosophical traditions that Grossberg identifies are empiricism and pragmatism, which suggest that

> contexts can be mapped as simple and static networks of lines of single (binary) determination or interaction; that the quantities of determination are equally distributed, and most importantly, that the structure, and every relation within it, is, in the first instance, politically neutral. (Grossberg, 2002, pp. 367–368)

In other words, communication theorists often assume that power is external to the process of communication. On the other hand, the question of power is the starting point in postcolonial theory, since the histories and geographies of colonialism deeply structure the Euro-American contexts of modernity and the colonizer–colonized relationships. Therefore, for Grossberg, postcolonial theory at the very least serves to remind communication theorists that "the contemporary

organizations of nations, states, ethnicities and races are the product of a colonial history and its continuing rearticulation in contemporary local and international, economic and cultural, relations" (p. 369). But, more importantly, Grossberg suggests that there are three key areas in which postcolonial theory can contribute much more to the study of contemporary media, communication, and culture. First, postcolonial theory goes beyond fixed notions of identity by deconstructing binary oppositions like colonizer–colonized, Western–Eastern, or dominant–subordinate and implicates both sides of such divides in the historical and geographical contexts of colonialism. For example, instead of understanding postcolonial contexts as "Eastern" and not "Western" or "Western" and "not Eastern," it offers an alternative approach – "Eastern and Western and …" This "other" way of conceptualizing postcolonial difference is what Grossberg calls a "positive system to identification" and can be theorized through notions like double consciousness, hybridity, subalternity, third space, and so on (p. 369).

Second, Grossberg argues, postcolonial theory cautions us that even our most commonsense notions of communication, culture, identity, and history are implicated in the project of colonialism. So while concepts like public/private or inside/outside may seem very obvious, or even universal, postcolonial theorists remind us to carefully examine the underlying values of the Eurocentric theories that frame the debates about such seemingly value-neutral terms and concepts. Third, Grossberg claims, postcolonial theory shatters the myth of objectivity as the ultimate arbitrator for evaluations of academic rigor. For instance, proponents of objectivity would argue that subjective notions like passion or political commitment cloud judgment and hinder the pursuit of academic rigor. On the other hand, postcolonial theorists counter that the demands of academic rigor would in fact require us to lay bare the many ways in which contemporary definitions of objectivity are shaped by colonial histories and the power of the knowledge categories produced by Western European and North American education systems. In doing so, Grossberg concludes, "postcolonial studies joins with the best work in communication studies in seeking to find more modest but still rigorous practices that will enable us to contribute, as intellectuals, to what is, in the end, always a political project" (p. 370).

Historically, one area where scholarship in communication studies has overlapped with postcolonial studies is the field of international communications, which – by definition – is concerned with questions of modern nationalism and with the relations between modern nation-states in global affairs. In what follows I will outline the different ways in which the question of nationalism has been considered in both postcolonial studies and international communications. In doing so, I seek to provide an overview of the some of the major debates in postcolonial theory and international communications over the past several decades, and in the process point to the productive tensions between the two disciplines. The first section of this chapter focuses on the historical debates over the question of modern nationalism in postcolonial theory. The second section foregrounds the ways in which scholars in the field of international communications

have dealt with the issue of nationalism in international affairs, specifically in relation to debates over question of "Third World" nationalism. The third and the final section outlines the challenges that both postcolonial theory and international communications face in the contemporary contexts of globalization, paying particular attention to the debates over post-nationalism, transnational capitalism, and the state of the world since the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War.

The Question of Nationalism in Postcolonial Studies

In postcolonial studies, the question of the origins and spread of modern nationalism – particularly Third World nationalism – is of singular importance. According to Gyan Prakash (1990), central to the issue of defining terms like the "postcolonial" or the "Third World" is the question: "How does the Third World write its own history"? To ask such a question, Prakash acknowledges, may seem at first glance to be exceedingly naive (Prakash, 1990, p. 383). For, says Prakash, such questions seem to only reaffirm the East–West, orient–occident oppositions that colonial history revels in and postcolonial theory seeks to challenge. Moreover, by asking how Third World writes its "own" history, the privileged Third World historian is rendered a native informant, and the Third World is construed as having a fixed space from which it can speak in a sovereign voice. Therefore Prakash wonders whether the postcolonial project of writing "Third World" histories of nationalism is a foolhardy enterprise. Nevertheless, Prakash consciously ventures into it by invoking the framework of what he calls "post-Orientalist historiography." He writes:

> The call for mapping post-Orientalist historiographies also acknowledges that the knowledge about the third world is historical … [and] therefore, runs counter to those procedures that ground the third world in essences and see history as determined by those essential elements. (Prakash, 1990, pp. 383–384)

To outline the challenges and the potential of working within a post-orientalist framework, Prakash uses India as a case study and provides a detailed critique of the various debates over the history and historiography of Indian nationalism. In this chapter I refer extensively to Prakash's (1990, 1992) essays, because they provide the most concise and comprehensive critiques of nationalist histories and historiographies in postcolonial discourse. This view is also shared by many of Prakash's most stringent critics – like the Marxist scholars Arif Dirlik (1994), or Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook (1992), who have engaged in extensive debates with his arguments about post-orientalist historiography in Indian history. These debates – although focused on the specific case of India – have attained canonical status in both postcolonial studies and Marxism and have appeared in many anthologies on postcolonial theory (see, for instance, Mongia, 1997 and Chaturvedi, 2000).

Prakash (1990) begins his study of post-orientalist historiographies in India by defining the term "orientalism" as discussed by Edward Said (1979). Referencing Said, Prakash defines orientalism as "a body of knowledge produced by texts and institutional practices … [which was] responsible for generating authoritative and essentializing statements about the Orient and was characterized by a mutually supporting relationship between power and knowledge" (Prakash, 1990, p. 384). Prakash thus finds three key elements that gave orientalism its coherence. First, its authoritative status; second, its fabrication of the orient in terms of essences perceived as immune to history; and, third, its incestuous relationship with the hegemony of other Western power/knowledge systems in the Third World. Prakash analyzes orientalism in India with respect to these three elements, to examine how orientalism has survived and transformed.

Orientalism in India, according to Prakash, was a European enterprise from the very beginning.

> The scholars were European; the audience was European; and the Indians figured as inert objects of knowledge. Because India was separated from the Orientalist knower, the Indian as object – as well as its representation – was construed to be outside and opposite of self. (Prakash, 1990, p. 385)

Since the "Western self" and the "Indian other" made sense only in opposition to each other, the traces of the other in the self were ignored or concealed. Orientalism also made the colonial conquest legitimate – the East–West binary oppostion was not created by colonialism but predated it. According to Prakash, although orientalism underwent considerable changes over time, its basic procedures of power/knowledge discourse remained rather stable.

The first major challenge to orientalism came, according to Prakash, from the early nationalists in India and from the nationalist historiographies written by Indian historians exposed to the orientalist discourses of European colonialism. The contradictions in the early nationalist history and historiography were many. Indian nationalists accepted the orientalist framework of modern nationalism, although this framework was engendered through opposition to orientalism: India was still an essentialized unity; its historical periodizations were still seen in terms of a linear teleology of the Hindu, Muslim, and the British periods established by European historians. Its representation underwent, however, dramatic changes: from passive to active, from inert to sovereign, from ahistorical and irrational to capable of relating to reason and history. In the wave of nationalist emotions aroused in the masses by the independence struggle, it was important for the nationalist historiography to claim that everything good in India was indigenous. Despite its complicity with orientalism, nationalist historiography did manage to break the orientalist monopoly, to establish India as an active subject, and to contribute to the fall of the colonial empire. Therefore, says Prakash, it should be considered one of the very important ways in which the Third World writes its own history.

An excellent study of the early attempts to imagine an "Indian" version of nationalist history is Partha Chatterjee's (1986) book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* In this well-known study, Chatterjee plots the transformations of Indian nationalism in colonial discourse along two axes: (a) the "problematic" of Indian nationalism; and (b) the "thematics" of cultural consciousness of the power elite. To "make sense of the various ideological ensembles" in Indian nationalism, Chatterjee divides the thematics of nationalist thought into three distinct moments or stages. He refers to the three stages or "moments" as: (i) the "moment of departure" (the formation of a nationalist thought in opposition to colonialism, as represented in the literary production of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, an early nationalist); (ii) the "moment of manoeuvre" (the consolidation of the "national" through the subversion of modern colonialism), as represented in the writings of Mahatma Gandhi, the architect of Indian freedom struggle; (iii) the "moment of arrival" (the actualization of the modern nation-state), as represented in the works of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister. By focusing on the writings of these three major figures in Indian nationalism, Chatterjee is able to "read" diverse nationalist imaginations as allegorical narratives that represent the struggles and challenges of imagining Indian nationalism both in relation and in opposition to the orientalist discourses of colonial history.

After India won its independence from British rule in 1947, economic, political, and cultural historians in India found in nationalist history an admirable ally for the postcolonial project of building the modern nation-state. In fact, as Chatterjee argues, the modernist nationalists were even able to hijack the appeal of Mahatma Gandhi's anti-colonial, anti-modern politics of mass mobilization in their efforts to rapidly modernize the nation-state. That history and historiography joined the project of modern nationalism is not surprising says Prakash, for, "[h]istory, as a discipline, was, after all, an instrument of post-Enlightenment regime of Reason; and the Indian nationalist historians, being Western-educated elites, were its eager proponents" (Prakash, 1990, p. 391).

If the early nationalist historiography of history accused orientalism (and colonialism) of deliberate ideological misrepresentations, then, beginning in the 1950s, Marxist historians launched a scathing critique of the nationalist project by pointing out that the undivided sovereign subject of nationalism in postcolonial India was just as ideological a construction as the colonial subject of British India. The major contribution of the Marxist historians, according to Prakash, was their ability to destabilize the unified narrative of the nationalist historiography and to point toward the heterogeneity of the nationalist subject – albeit primarily in the economic domain of class interests. Beginning in the 1970s, a group of structuralist historians attempted to see heterogeniety in India in the cultural and social domains. Whereas the Marxists emphasized class struggle, the social historians underplayed conflict and were more interested in the structures engendering history. Both these approaches, however, were still essentialist – the essence of class for the Marxist historians, and the essence of deep structures for the social historians.

The concluding section of Prakash's historiography is post-foundationalism or non-essentialism. The most prominent post-foundationalist attempt in India, according to Prakash, is to be found in the works of the subaltern studies collective – a group of Indian and British Marxist historians in India, Britain, Australia, and the United States. Arguing that most of Indian historiography is teleological and foundationalist, the group attempts to construct history from below – from the subaltern's perspective. One of the founding members of the Subaltern Studies Group (SSG), Ranajit Guha (1988, p. 35) writes that the word "subaltern" is used "as a name for the general attribute of subordination … whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office, or in any other way."

According to Prakash, although the Sublatern Studies Group's deployment of the subaltern as a category of analysis is refreshing, the subaltern studies historians at times relapsed into the essentialist frameworks of colonialist and nationalist histories – for instance in their use of Hegalian–Marxists dialectics in constructing teleological narratives of Indian history, and in and their attempts to "recover the subaltern" as the most authentic and sovereign subject of postcolonial India. In the Subaltern Studies Group's emphasis on the marginalized status of subaltern groups in postcolonial India, Prakash finds similarities with postmodern and post-structuralist critiques of power relations in the West. In his view, the emergence of post-orientalist historiographies can be located "at the point where poststructuralist, Marxist and feminist theories converge and intersect" (Prakash, 1990, p. 401).

A good framework for understanding the intersections of post-structuralism, Marxism, and feminism in the writing of post-orientalist histories of Third World nationalism is the debate in postcolonial theory over Benedict Anderson's influential book *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 1983). Anderson argues that modern nations were imagined into existence, on the basis of premodern cultural systems such as kingships and the religious communities that preceded them. Weaving the neglected histories of cultural imaginations and their mediated representations with the "official" histories of the political–economic institutions of colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism, Anderson creatively coins the term "print-capitalism." In this context, Anderson's originality lies not merely in connecting the transformations of print-capitalism to nationalist imaginations. Rather, what is most creative in Anderson's work is the proposition that the first forms of nationalism, which were imagined into existence through print-capitalism in the Americas and in Europe, later on provided the models for nationalist imaginations in the colonial world.

In *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2001) argues that Benedict Anderson's influential notion of nations as imagined communities is a useful reminder that imagination is a very real and productive phenomenon in everyday life, and therefore should not be understood as something that is false or unreal. Although the central argument of *Imagined Communities* cautions us against reading imagination to mean falsehood, Chakrabarty finds that Anderson takes the meaning of imagination to be self-evident. Yet in European thought – which is Anderson's starting point in the history of imagined communities – the meaning

of the word "imagination" has a long and complex genealogy. For Chakrabarty, the historical debate over the status of imagination in European thought can be encapsulated in the following question, asked of the Spinozian tradition by Coleridge in his *Biographia literaria* (1815–1817, p. 174): "Was God a subject endowed with a (mental) faculty called 'imagination,' or did God exist simply in the ways of the world without being gathered into anything in the nature of a subject?" Chakrabarty argues that in the modern history of Western thought – from Coleridge to Anderson – imagination remains a subject-centered activity of representation through the human act of seeing. The Spinozian tradition of imagination as a nonsubjectivist vision of the divine and the nonhuman, on the other hand, has been relegated to the margins of Western thought. In the Indian context, however, there is a "family of viewing practices" (Chakrabarty, 2001, p. 175) that permeates the mainstream imagination and has always been able to reconcile the (Western) split between subjectivist and nonsubjectivist dimensions of imagination. One such family of viewing practices is *darshan*.

A polysemic Sanskrit term that has been borrowed into many north and south Indian languages, *darshan* can be read to mean both (human) seeing and (divine or nonhuman) vision. In articulating the double meaning of imagination as a representation of subjectivist sight and as a nonrepresentational, nonsubjectivist vision, Chakrabarty suggests that *darshan* "refers to the exchange of human sight with the divine that supposedly happens inside a temple or in the presence of an image in which the deity has become manifest (*murati*)" (p. 173). By invoking the difference between Western notions of imagination and the genealogy of *darshan* as a family of viewing practices, Chakrabarty counters Anderson's assumptions about imagination as a self-evident process at work in the generation and spread of nationalism in the modern world.

In "Whose Imagined Community?" Partha Chatterjee (1993) similarly offers a spirited critique of Anderson's *Imagined Communities* from the perspective of post-colonial nationalism. Chatterjee commends Anderson for moving the debate on nationalism away from sterile, utilitarian theories about "official" institutions of Western liberalism and Marxism that have, for decades, formed the conceptual rubric in discussions about nations as political states. While agreeing that nations all over the world are "imagined communities" rather than "determined products of given sociological conditions," Chatterjee takes a central objection to Anderson's argument: If nations are imagined communities, and if nations in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined communities from certain models made available to them by Europe and the Americas, Chatterjee asks, "what do they have left to imagine?" (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 5). He argues that proclaiming the imagined communities of Europe and of the Americas as the only true subjects of modern nationalism decrees that in the postcolonial world "[e]ven our imaginations must remain forever colonized" (p. 5). Chatterjee points out that his objection to Anderson's universalist history of nationalism in terms of Euro-American models of imagination is based not on sentimental reasons, but on empirical evidence of anti-colonial nationalist struggles. This evidence suggests that

"[t]he most powerful as well as the most creative results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa are posited not on an identity with but rather on a *difference*" from the Euro-American model prescribed by Anderson. How can we ignore this empirical evidence "without reducing the experience of anti-colonial nationalism to a caricature of itself?" he asks. Chaterjee argues that Anderson's theory of nationalism conceived in terms of a universal history of battles between European powers for control of the material domain in the colonial world, is fundamentally flawed, because "difference is not a viable criterion in the domain of the material" (p. 9).

Chatterjee (systematically outlines differences in the imaginations of the nation from European imaginations of the same in the realms of language, theater, literature, and family relations. For instance, elaborating the "differences" between European imaginations of the nation in the modern novel and nationalist imaginations in Indian languages, Chatterjee finds that, in devising the prose and aesthetics of the Indian novel, nationalist elites drew not only on the English novel, but also on the ancient traditions of Sanskrit drama and vernacular folk theater. He finds that Indian novelists imagined their national identity and cultural difference by positing two distinct spheres of their community: the private sphere of the home (which he defines as "spiritual") and the public sphere of world (which he describes as the "material").

Chatterjee outlines three major thematics in the nationalist project of negotiating between the private sphere of the spiritual and public sphere of the material: (1) strategic appropriation of the spiritual realm as the repository of natural truths from which an essentialized form of national identity is imagined; (2) classicization of tradition through systematic inclusions ("us") and exclusions ("them") to construct a "golden age" of nationalist history; (3) institutionalization of the modern regimes of power in order to articulate the difference between the home and the world. As Chatterjee points out, nationalist elites in the colonial world legitimized their cultural identity by marking the *difference* of the private sphere of the home (us) from the public realm of the world (them), particularly since the latter was directly dominated by British colonial rulers.

Chatterjee's and Chakrabarty's invocation of historical "difference" in postcolonial discourse is, however, not without its problems. Since difference is the marker of identity, one can no longer speak of an imagined sameness *within* communities and nations either. For instance, to speak of, say, *the* imagined community of Indian nationalism, or of *the* Indian novel as Chatterjee does is to ignore that, even within "India," there are different imaginations of publicness and privateness in both elite and subaltern spheres of the nation. Gayatri Spivak (1988) addresses this central predicament of historical difference in postcolonial discourse through the provocative question of the title: "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak's own answer to the question is an emphatic no. The conclusion is arrived at, as Spivak puts it, "by a necessarily circuitous route" – one of deconstructing the question of the sovereign subject in relation to "the extraordinarily paradoxical status of the British abolition of widow sacrifice" or *sati* in colonial India (Spivak, 1988, p. 271). (*Sati* refers to the archaic Hindu practice of the widow's self-immolation on the pyre of her dead husband.)

Through "a critique of current Western efforts to problematize the subject to the question of how the third-world subject is represented within Western discourse," Spivak finds that "the manipulation of female agency" in the various colonial, nationalist, and vernacular representations of *sati* persistently forecloses the possibility of any collective articulation of "woman" as "subaltern" (p. 271). Therefore, for Spivak, the woman's agency – as a sovereign subaltern subject – is articulated only in its deafening silence. When this silence is broken by various elite representations in the discourse of *sati*, however well intentioned these may be, the constitutive identity of the subaltern is lost forever. Spivak's essay on the subaltern's silence is much cited, and since its publication in 1988 it has generated considerable debate in postcolonial theory. For, by asking the question "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak forcefully brings to our attention many age-old questions about the location of culture and about the possibilities and limits of representation.

As Homi Bhabha (1994) argues in the contexts of colonial and postcolonial discourse in India, the location of culture is perhaps best addressed through the notion of hybridity, which is, at once, a site of both identity and difference. This dual articulation that is always at play in Bhabha's notion of hybridity cannot be explained merely in terms of identity with the colonizer (as in Anderson's modular nationalist imagination) or through difference (as in Chaterjee's critique of Anderson's model). Rather, as Bhabha suggests, it can be addressed only in terms of what Jacques Derrida has variously called *différance*, dissemination, or deconstruction (among other appellations). In this Derridean context, whatever its name, the notion of *différance* refers to two meanings of the verb "to differ" (or *différer* in French) – which, as Derrida points out, seems to differ from itself. Therefore, for Derrida (1973), the notion of *différance* is different from the notion of difference:

> [it] indicates the middle voice, it precedes and sets up the opposition between passivity and activity. With its *a*, *différance* more properly refers to what in classical language would be called the origin or production of differences and the differences between differences, the *play* [*jeu*] of differences. Its locus and operation will therefore be seen wherever speech appeals to difference. (Derrida, 1973, p. 130)

Extending to the postcolonial context Derrida's theory of the silent writing of *différance* through the dissemination of a sameness that is not identity, Bhabha (1994) creatively coins the compound term "dissemiNation." Following Derrida, Bhabha suggests that the location of culture in nations, communities, and identities can only be addressed in terms of a paradoxical double notion of identity/difference that is indicated in a "middle voice" or hybridity. This middle voice, or hybridity, which "precedes and sets up" the opposition between identity and difference in postcolonial discourse, is aptly articulated through the dissemiNation of the nation, that is to say, in the silent writing of its Name – with a silent but emphatic capital "N." Bhabha's appropriation of Derrida's theory of dissemination

(or *différance* or deconstruction) enables us to comprehend the many double movements of identity/difference in the paradoxical processes of the dissemination of nationalism in postcolonial discourse.

Third World Nationalism and International Communications

In the field of international communications, the question of nationalism also provided some of the earliest modes for the study of power relations in international affairs. A case in point is the well-known book titled *The Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*, co-authored by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm (1956). In this influential work, Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm define as follows "the four major theories behind the functioning of the world's presses," or "the media of mass communications": (1) the authoritarian theory, which developed in late Renaissance and was based on the idea that truth is the product of a few wise men; (2) the libertarian theory, which arose from the works of men like Milton, Locke, Mill, and Jefferson and avowed that the search for truth is one of the human being's natural rights; (3) the social responsibility theory, a more contemporary version of liberalism that argues for equal rights and equal access to media for both majority and minority opinions; (4) the Soviet communist theory, an expanded and more positive Marxist version of the old authoritarian theory.

During the Cold War era, models like the four theories of the press became the dominant framework in the United States for understanding international relations among the so-called First World (Western) nations, the Second World (Soviet and communist) nations, and the Third World nations (the rest). The First World model of "social responsibility" in global affairs outlined in *The Four Theories of the Press* also derives greater legitimacy from an earlier model of international development, known as the Marshall Plan, which was successfully implemented by the United States after World War II in order to aid in the political, economic, technological, and cultural development of the war-ravaged nations of Western Europe without any apparent gains for itself. Therefore, not surprisingly, in the post-World War II era proponents of international development in the United States sought to replicate the Western European success story of the Marshall Plan in fights against what they saw as underdevelopment in the Third World, and, as a corollary, to combat the ideologies of authoritarianism and communist disinformation coming from the Second World.

Among the early proponents of international development in the Third World was Daniel Lerner, an expert in the study of psychological warfare through propaganda during World War II, and the author of *Sykewar: Psychological Warfare against Germany* (Lerner, 1949). In a later book, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Lerner (1958) used his expertise in psychological warfare to combat a new enemy

of the First World nations: underdevelopment in the Third World. In this book, subtitled *Modernizing the Middle East*, Lerner evaluated the role of communications media in the modernization of "traditional" societies in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Syria, and Turkey.

Following Lerner's influential study, many other similar attempts were made, in the 1950s and 1960s to apply, extend, and revise Lerner's communications model so as to make it tackle the various problems of "underdevelopment" in the Third World. For instance, Everett M. Rogers, in his book titled *Diffusion of Innovations* (Rogers, 1962), enthusiastically espoused the cause of international development through modernization in the Third World and argued for the diffusion of innovative technologies, ideas, and practices in all areas of life in traditional societies from agriculture, animal husbandry, health, and family welfare to housing, education, and literacy. In a later work, *Modernization among Peasants*, Rogers and Svenning (1969) advanced ambitious projects of development designed to modernize the peasantry in the Third World. The proclaimed goal of these projects was to develop modern media institutions in rural areas of the Third World for the rapid transmission of informational, educational, and entertainment programming that would be relevant to the everyday lives of peasants. Since First World countries like the United States, Britain, Canada, and Germany had pioneered the use of radio and television for national development, the Euro-American model of development was proclaimed by Rogers and others as the "dominant paradigm" in international communications.

The rise of "development" as the dominant paradigm and the definition of the Third World in terms of the new category of "underdevelopment" radically changed the way in which the world was seen. Before "development" and "underdevelopment" became the dominant categories for defining the "Third World," the identities of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in global affairs were largely defined by and within the colonizer–colonized relationship. As Gilbert Rist (1997) points out, by championing a new international order based on the three worlds framework, the First World countries led by the United States were attempting to signal a clear break from the "old imperialism" of the pre-World War II era, when European colonizers exploited the colonies and extracted their surplus resources for profit. What was promised in its place was a new international order, based in the language of development, where "every state was equal *de iure*, even if it was not (yet) *de facto*" (Rist, 1997, p. 73). Drawing on the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the United Nations Organization, the new ideology of international development projected a utopian ideal for "the progressive globalization of the system of States." These early efforts to map a new world order in the aftermath of World War II are noteworthy, because they introduced the language of development to replace the older regimes of colonialism in the Third World, even though the new language of development was hampered by some of the same Eurocentric ideologies and assumptions of empiricism and pragmatism that Grossberg (2002) identifies in his critique of American communication studies.

Several critics of the Western-centric models of international development argued that the modern nation-state is not the solution to the problems of the Third World but is instead one of the last remnants of colonialism. For instance, the noted postcolonial critic Ashish Nandy (1987) argues that, in the so-called "underdeveloped third world," the nation-state, as the flag bearer modernization, has unleashed a regime of "internal colonialism" and has systematically marginalized local traditions, folk mythologies, minority communities, and tribal identities. Invoking the very trope of "tradition" (which advocates of modernization like Lerner and Rogers would define as underdevelopment), Nandy invites us to imagine alternatives visions of communities and identities based on nonmodern principles of communication, culture, and community. Therefore, for Nandy, the ills of the modern nation-state in the Third World do not reside in age-old traditions but emerge from in the "Eurocentric" project of development, which establishes its hegemony through the modern ideologies of science, history, and progress.

For Marxist critics of global capitalism, the ideology of development not only serves to perpetuate the West's neocolonial dominance over the rest, but also helps legitimize the claims of the United States to be the ultimate ideal of a utopian modern society that Third World countries must emulate in order to rapidly modernize their governments, educational institutions, medical establishments, and media organizations. International communications scholars like Herbert Schiller (1976) argued that the dominance of the development paradigm in the Third World creates a culture of dependency on the global capitalist system dominated by Western-centric multinational corporations. For critics like Schiller, even the seemingly benevolent "aid" packages coming from the First World to the Third World in the name of development were implicated in the larger context of cultural imperialism, where Western European and Northern American powers dominate less powerful countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The cultural imperialism approach attempted to tackle the complexities of power relations in international communications by focusing attention on the ways in which Western governments and multinational media corporations remand the profits made globally back to their corporate headquarters located in Western capitals without adequately supporting local media companies, artists, or cultures in the Third World.

In *Cultural Imperialism*, John Tomlinson (1991) argues that at first glance the critiques of "Americanization" or "Westernization" emerging from the cultural imperialism thesis and from dependency theories appear to do a very good job of taking into account the entire complex of power relations at work in international communications and in the transnational production and distribution of the media. Yet Tomlinson finds that the cultural imperialism thesis suffers from at least three major limitations. First, it fails to account for the power of audiences to resist the domination that can occur in even the most exploitative contexts of the Third World. Second, the cultural imperialism thesis establishes a facile equation between the economic power of the Western media industries and of the communication infrastructure and their effects on cultural values in local contexts

around the world. Third, Tomlinson finds that the cultural imperialism thesis is based on a false characterization of local cultures in the Third World as being inherently authentic and previously unspoiled by contact with other cultures. Furthermore, critics of the cultural imperialism thesis argued that one can never fully understand the complex working of the political, economic, cultural, and technological dimensions of power in international communications without taking into account the specificity of global/local relations in diverse contexts.

As the noted cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall (1997) points out, by paying closer attention to the question of context, one can move away from simplistic accounts of cultural imperialism, which rest on generalized but empirically untested notions of the overwhelming power of a handful of capitalist media corporations that can do pretty much whatever they want around the world. Therefore Hall argues that more attention should be paid to the production and consumption of media texts and cultural identities and to the meanings that audiences make in specific contexts as a way to better understand how the "global" and the "local" are mutually constituted and articulated in the complex circuit of culture.

As the theories of cultural dependency, cultural imperialism, neocolonialism, and cultural studies gained ground in international communications in the 1970s, there was a growing recognition, both in the West and outside of it, of the flaws of the dominant model of international development. Even some of the early pioneers of the Western model of development, like Everett Rogers (1977), proclaimed the death of the "dominant paradigm" and joined in the call for new models of international communications, which took into account the realities of the inequities in power relations between nations and cultures.

At the same time, nationalist leaders from the Third World expressed concerns about the one-way flow of information from the West to the rest and demanded a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Initiated by a group of nations under the banner of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and sponsored by UNESCO, the NWICO debate was a valiant attempt to redress the imbalances of communication and information flows in international communications among the so-called Western First World, communist Second World, and developing Third World nations. Such was the power of the demands for NWICO that it was extensively debated in the United Nations by the various representatives of nations, and a committee was set up under the leadership of Sean McBride to look into the various inequities of international and intercultural communications. In 1980 the McBride Committee published a report called *One World Many Voices*, which argued in favor of creating a more egalitarian and equitable order for information and communications flows around the world (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1980). Although the celebration of a New World Information and Communication Order and the proclamation of a "New Paradigm" in the McBride report did address the question of inequities and power relations, the attempts to redress the daunting political realities of the three worlds system left much to be desired. For instance, while the First World nations heartily embraced the notion of a "free flow" of information, they resisted

any kinds of curbs on the freedom to exchange this information around the world. On their part, the non-aligned nations, often with strategic support from the Soviet Union, were inclined to accept the freedom to exchange information globally, but only if this exchange was a "fair" one. Given the realities of power inequities among nations, they remained committed to take all measures to protect their national security and cultural sovereignty in the NWICO.

Faced with irreconcilable differences among First World, Second World, and Third World nations in the definitions of "freedom" and "fairness" in the international arena, the Non-Aligned Movement's revolutionary initiative for free and fair flow of information in the new world order was doomed to failure. The reasons for this failure are many. For one, the initial euphoria of nationalist independence movements was already a distant memory for many African and Asian countries. Given the political and economic compulsions of national development, many Third World nations were consumed by an overwhelming desire to "catch up" with the West in the international capitalist order. Many Third World nations fell into dictatorships and military regimes. Led by the United States, Western nations often imposed enormous political–economic pressure on many "radical" regimes. While several Third World nations tried to counter the power and might of First World ones, often with overt or covert assistance from the Soviet Union, they ended up getting caught in a complex web of Cold War politics between the First World and the Second World nations.

Globalization, International Communications, and Postcolonial Theory

Beginning in the 1990s, after the fall of the former Soviet Union and with the marginalization of the Third World's non-alignment initiative, there was growing recognition in international communications that the end of the Cold War represented the rise of a new*er* world order, which was fundamentally at odds with the three worlds system that had been the dominant framework for thinking about global affairs after World War II. As the United States was emerging victorious in its Cold War struggles against the Soviet Union, advocates for the unhindered use of American superpower in international affairs enthusiastically proclaimed that the world had reached the "end of history" in the globalization of the Western-style free enterprise of democracy and capitalism (see, for instance, Friedman, 1999; Fukuyama, 1992; Ohmae, 1995).

However, for Marxist critics of the global capitalist system such as Immanuel Wallerstein (1991), the end of the Cold War signaled that the world had arrived in "the true realm of uncertainty" (p. 15). In his earlier work on world systems theory, Wallerstein (1980) argued that a single, interdependent world system of capitalist integration is not a creation of contemporary global capitalism. Rather, he argues, it has existed since the sixteenth century, beginning with European expansionism and colonialism. Since its inception, goes the Wallersteinian argument, this world

system has imposed a hierarchy in which labor is exploited by capitalist ownership, which seeks to accumulate surplus. Over time, as this exploitation evolves, the economy spreads to other regions and nations, creating a world economy in which strong capitalist nations dominate weaker ones.

The world system envisioned by Wallerstein consists not merely of weak and strong nations. Rather it comprises a three-level system in which the strong nations form the core, the weak nations form the periphery, and the not so weak (or the not so strong) form the semi-periphery. In Wallerstein's world system, the semi-periphery nations take up the role that middlemen perform in the relationship between ownership and labor in a capitalist economy; or the role that the middle class performs in the relationship between elites and subalterns in a nationalist economy. According to Wallerstein, in performing this role of a "go-between," the semi-peripheral nations of the postcolonial world or the Third World nations reinforce the dependency of the periphery on the core, even as they provide a relative autonomy and flexibility to the otherwise rigid world system.

In an article titled "Who Is Afraid of Postcoloniality?," Prakash (1996) concedes that the notion of a single, world capitalist system has become "enormously powerful and truly global," ever since the fall of the Soviet Union "opened fresh territories for the spread of capital" in erstwhile Second World and Third World countries (p. 198). While recognizing this "unprecedented advance in the internationalization of capital," Prakash advocates caution and skepticism toward the by now familiar "apocalyptic visions announcing the end of the world" in the "last stage of capitalism," its "final general crisis," and "its spread to every corner of the globe." This note of caution, Prakash argues, "is not to contest the thesis of an unprecedented global integration." Rather, it is intended to be skeptical about "announcements of the ultimate capitalist homogenization of the globe." These announcements, Prakash argues, "either diffuse criticism or postpone it to the time of the future catastrophe." Therefore Prakash is particularly skeptical of Marxist critics of global capitalist integration such as Arif Dirlik and Aijaz Ahmed, "who direct plenty of polemical fire and self-righteous rhetoric … in their zeal to represent themselves as the last anticapitalist intellectuals." While affirming that "capital can breath a 'pure' life," these critics, Prakash argues, assume "the universalization of capital to be such an accomplished fact that anything other than a labor–capital conflict becomes a diversion, an epiphenomenon of capitalism itself." For Prakash, however, "such transparent posturing for the critical intellectuals" ignores the hybrid life of capital itself (p. 199). Prakash reminds us that to acknowledge hybridity in this context is not to speak of resistance to the homogeneity of global capitalism. Rather, to recognize hybridization is to

> acknowledge that globalization is a differentiated and differentiating structure. It operates in unevenness, and it proceeds by domesticating difference. Even as three worlds collapse into one, this process does not mean erosion of difference but its rearticulation. (Prakash, 1996, p. 199)

In a similar vein, Arjun Appadurai (1993) argues that we are entering a postnational world where the disruption of the traditional markers of national identity has been accompanied by the resurrection of primordial identities and communal affinities to bolster ideologies of nationalism and patriotism. In this context Appadurai alludes to the violence and terror surrounding the breakdown of the former Eastern bloc, xenophobic violence in Western Europe, Sikh demand for Khalistan in India, French Canadian feelings about Quebec, Palestinian demands for self-determination in the Middle East. Locating the source of violence in the trope of "tribes" that the notion of nationalism reactivates, Appadurai seeks to identify social forms that compel us to think post-nationally, because in many postcolonial cultures nationalism, "as the ideological alibi of the territorial state … is the last refuge of ethnic totalitarianism … [and] its discourses have been shown to be deeply implicated in the discourse of colonialism itself" (Appadurai, 1993, p. 412). To free ourselves from the notions of the "tribe" and the "nation" and to imagine postmodern forms of identities and communities beyond nationalism, Appadurai advocates close examination of "of the discourses that are contained within the hyphen that links nation to state" and widening the scope from the study of literary texts to more mundane discourses of bureaucracies, armies, private corporations, and non-state social organizations.

In the context of the collapse of the three worlds system and of the subsequent calls for thinking post-nationally in a global postmodern culture that Appadurai so aptly articulates, the question of Third World nationalism that I began with needs to be reformulated in terms of the rather ambiguous and ambivalent spaces of global capitalism that David Harvey (1989), Fredric Jameson (1991), Jean Francois Lyotard (1984), and Jean Baudrillard (1994) have respectively termed post-Fordism, late capitalism, the postmodern condition, and the fourth world. The acute reality of the contemporary global condition, as these scholars point out, is that, even as we seem to be entering into a "borderless world" of capitalist integration, the issues of national boundaries, local contexts, cultural identities, and primordial communities have not been relegated to the dustbin of history. More recently, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2004) have extended these arguments to suggest that the contemporary context of globalization requires us to speak of the world in terms of a new kind of "empire" where there are no sovereign territories of nations and states except for a multitude of local positions that creatively deterritorialize and are powerfully deterritorialized from within the space of the empire itself. Entrenched in the place of earlier notions of colonial or nationalist models of state sovereignty, Empire now controls the right to existence.

Critically extending the insights of postmodern theory and poststructuralist critiques to the postcolonial context, Prakash (1996) argues that "it is all too easy" to read the creativity, hybridity, and cultural ambivalence of Third World nations, communities, and identities merely in terms of a post-structuralist "commitment to antiessentialist epistemology" or as "a reflection of postmodern decentering and pastiche" (p. 200). Instead, Prakash suggests, it is more productive to consider the

deconstruction, doubling, disjunction, dialogism, and deterritorialization in the postcolonial world as creative attempts to "respond to a situation in which historical developments have deeply compromised some of the old truths or rendered them irrelevant." For instance, Prakash points to the postcolonial Indian example, where "the Enlightenment project of building a rational ordered society offers a choice" between state-sponsored secularism and religious conservativism. In such contexts, where notions of the liberal nation-state and third-worldism have been "squeezed dry of their emancipatory potential," Prakash argues, "we need to think through and beyond established forms of politics and knowledge … along differentiated, interpellated, mobile and unsettling lines."

The lines along which Prakash seeks to intervene in the postcolonial context are "those relocations of dominant discourse" that emerge "not from the nation-state, not from the Third World space, but from contingent, contentious and heterogeneous subaltern positions." The diverse, contingent, and contentious subaltern positions that are produced and reproduced in a schizophrenic frenzy through the deconstruction, doubling, or deterritorialization in the postcolonial context are necessarily hybrid and may often seem vulgar in relation to some of the more conventional definitions of the colonized other in colonial discourse, of subaltern identities in Marxist theory, or of traditional communities in the developmental paradigm. However, the hybrid positionalities of the postcolonial subaltern are also creative and therefore potentially transformative in that they no longer strictly adhere to more conventional narratives of Third World nationalist histories, to the First World ideals of international development, or to the colonialist fantasies about the non-Western "other." In this changing context, the driving questions for postcolonial theory can longer be about how the Third World writes its own history. Instead, I would contend that scholars in postcolonial theory – or in international communications or in any other discipline in the humanities and social sciences, for that matter – must tackle the question of how we address – theoretically, methodologically, politically, and ethically – the hybrid creativity and the transformative potentiality of the heterogeneous, contentious, and contingent subaltern positions in the contemporary contexts of globalization and culture of the twenty-first century.

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22

Reconceptualizing "Cultural Imperialism" in the Current Era of Globalization

Mel van Elteren

Cultural imperialism concerns the domination of one culture over another, which is by definition a context-dependent and time-bound affair and need not be all encompassing. It can take the form of a cultural power imbalance that is the unintended result of economic and technological transfers, along with structural power inequities between societies. It can also involve an active and deliberate policy in which a powerful country uses cultural means to attain or support the political and economic ends of imperialism that were historically attained through military force and occupation. In this case, the tools of "soft power" can facilitate domination by exposing local people to lifestyles to aspire to, to products to desire, and even to new sources of allegiance to the imperial power. This may lead to imperialism by invitation, whereby the cultural influence in question is consented to and voluntarily embraced by its recipients.

The classic cultural imperialism thesis posits harmful outcomes from the imported culture and does not account for its possibly beneficiary effects on the receiving cultures. In its conventional usage, the concept of cultural imperialism refers to a global situation in which powerful culture industries and actors located almost exclusively in the West, and particularly in the United States, dominate other local, national, and regional cultures and actors. In the process, the autonomy of receiving societies, as well as their cultural values and identities, would be weakened or destroyed. This domination is understood as being largely the outcome of fundamental historical inequalities that have resulted in most of political and economic power being concentrated in the West – and, again, especially in the United States. Exponents of cultural imperialism thinking have not only preoccupied themselves with unequal cultural flows between developed and developing countries, however. They have also been concerned about inequalities in cultural

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streams among developed countries, for instance between the United States and Canada, Australia or France. Yet scholarship deploying a cultural imperialism perspective has paid considerably less attention to the question of cultural transfers between countries typically conceived of as being outside the "global center," such as cultural flows from China into Indonesia, for example.

Because the concept has especially been used in the fields of media and international communication studies since the 1970s, there has been a tendency to equate cultural imperialism with media imperialism. This practice implies that the media have such an overwhelming role in the process referred to as "cultural imperialism" that the word "cultural" is often interchangeable with the word "media." Media imperialism was defined as

> the process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution of content of media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantially external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected. (Boyd-Barrett, 1977, p. 117)

Media imperialism scholars considered whether imbalances in power resources were due to market advantage, differential government sponsorship, or hegemonic expression within complex cultural formations and/or whether these elicited resistance. There was also a recognition that extra-national media influences impinged on different media differently at various times.

But media imperialism can best be thought of as a subcategory of cultural imperialism. The latter may also cover education, religion, business practice, consumerism, law, government policy, dress, marriage customs, and still other cultural dimensions. To fully understand claims about media imperialism, one should examine the relationship of the media to other aspects of a culture, without assuming its centrality from the outset (White, 2001). One would have to look at the role of media alongside other aspects of the way in which powerful institutions and actors of some societies exert cultural influence over others. Many other industries produce and market cultural goods that are part of global cultural transfers, while tourism and travel industries transport millions of people across the world.

The adoption of a crude version of "media imperialism" also fostered a truncated historical analysis of and disregard for earlier historical processes. Cultural legacies of European imperialisms probably have had a more profound and far-reaching impact as carriers of Eurocentric modernization to the global South than the subsequent arrival of the electronic media has had (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1997). The notion of cultural imperialism has a much wider reach than the later twentieth-century setting. It has been applied to practices of Britain, France, Spain, the Ottoman Empire, and other imperial powers throughout history. Critics of US cultural imperialism have been accused of demonstrating a "remarkable provincialism" in ignoring the existence of empire before the United States (Gienow-Hecht, 2000, pp. 479–480).

History of the Concept of Cultural Imperialism

Although the concept had been used before, it was only in the late 1960s and early 1970s that "cultural imperialism" emerged as an analytical and political framework through which to theorize global cultural production and consumption (Roach, 1997). It did so partly in response to modernization theory, a dominant framework in the sociology of development current in the late 1950s and 1960s, which upheld the Western paradigm of development as the model for the entire world. This model implied a single global process of modernization, through a unilinear diffusion of Western technologies, social institutions, life patterns, and value systems to what was then called the "Third World." The spread of Western influence was also meant to establish a bulwark against the spread of communism. The protagonists of this discourse were First World political scientists and economists, mostly associated with US universities, research institutes, foundations, and corporations or with international organizations. Development along the lines of capitalist modernization demanded the displacement of "the particularistic norms" of tradition by "more universalistic" mixtures of the modern, to help create an "achievement-oriented" society. The successful importation of media technologies and forms of communication from the United States was promoted as a critical component of this fundamental change process, as members of elite sectors were trained to be models for and leaders of a broader population allegedly mired in backward forms of thought and behavior patterns and lacking trust in the national organizations required for modernization (Miller, 2005, pp. 73–74). Modernization theory was criticized because of its Western centrism (if not US centrism), its premise that modernization was normative, and the fact that it obscured the embeddedness of individual societies in wider social systems. "Cultural imperialism" also entailed a critical response to liberal marketplace theory, which holds that the spread of cultural products should basically be seen as the result of consumer demand and choice rather than as the outcome of inequities in global cultural production, distribution, and flow (Fejes, 1981).

Cultural imperialism perspectives are rooted in the critical political economy tradition. Researchers working within this field have focused on systemic issues such as capital, infrastructure, and politico-economic concentration of power as determinants of international cultural transfers and communication processes. They have borrowed heavily from dependency theory and from a core–periphery model of global political economic relations, as well as from Marxist theories of society and development. Dependency theory, a Latin American outgrowth of world systems theory that attained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, elaborated the notion that underdevelopment was not simply a matter of some countries' progress lagging behind that of others, but rather gave structural advantages to developed countries. Dependency theorists such as A. Gunder Frank pointed out how, through the spread of unbridled capitalism from a few core

advanced industrial countries to the periphery, the West was supplied with raw materials and cheap labor as well as with markets for its manufactured goods. Therefore it was in the interest of those powerful countries to maintain their domination.

Initially cultural imperialism thinking was most prominent in Latin America, where one could find numerous adherents such as Antonio Pasquali, Luis Ramero Beltrán, Fernando Reyes Matta, and Mario Kaplún. In the early 1970s the Non-Aligned Movement, which represented the developing countries of the Third World, also played a significant role in placing this concept on the international agenda. These countries formed a kind of strategic non-official alliance with the "socialist countries" of the "East" (the "Second World" countries). The socialist/communist East was divided between the USSR and China, and also among its European group. New World Information Order (NWIO)'s main support in the East came from reformist and liberal groupings – those that would later promote glasnost. Yet some of the most influential scholars associated with the development of the notion of cultural imperialism have been critical scholars from the West, liberal and leftist – Herbert Schiller, Armand Mattelart, Peter Golding, Oliver Boyd-Barrett, and Dallas Smythe among them. The first wave of research focused on nation-states as primary actors in international relations, contending that rich Western nation-states exported their cultural products and imposed their sociocultural values on poorer nations in the developing world. This group of researchers produced a number of studies that demonstrated that the flow of broadcast news and entertainment was biased in favor of developed Western countries, both quantitatively and qualitatively: While most media flows were exported by those Western countries into developing nations, the latter received scant and biased news coverage in Western media (Kraidy, 2005, pp. 22–23).

This first group drew particular attention to the relationship between the economic expansion of US capitalism in the South and the extensive exportation of US popular culture and mass media products, as well as communication technology. First, these media and culture industries supported the expansion of multinational corporations in general; second, these industries were in their own right increasingly important multinational corporations (MNCs); and, third, these same companies were part of a military–industrial–communications complex that had expanded massively since the 1960s. It was assumed that the communication structures and cultural industries complemented and helped to maintain the economic structures of capitalism. One should recognize the specific historical context that gave rise to cultural imperialism thinking. The period from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s was precisely the time of strong economic expansion of US-based MNCs in the global South. Other key contextual factors in this period were the Vietnam War and an increase in Western-backed military dictatorships in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Roach, 1997, pp. 47–48).

The critical debates about cultural imperialism during the 1970s and 1980s both paralleled and overlapped international debates about the regulation of media imports in the interest of national development. The controversy pitted the US

conception of the "free flow of information," which promoted unregulated markets in news and entertainment, against many other countries' insistence on the need for balance in media exchanges, particularly of news. A series of UNESCO reports, seminars, and declarations articulated the latter position, calling for a "new world information and communication order" (NWICO) whose objectives included democratizing communications, curbing the power of the transnational media lobbies, and encouraging autonomous media policies in the developing world. This movement provided a moral–political platform for the restructuring of the global communication system, from one dominated by four major Western news agencies to one in which control was distributed proportionately between the global North and the global South. The NWICO movement focused primarily on the mass media, giving limited attention to the larger questions of culture, identity, and globalization, with which scholars outside communication research became increasingly preoccupied.

The call for a NWICO preoccupied UNESCO and the Non-Aligned Movement until the US, the UK, and Singapore withdrew from UNESCO in 1984–1985. The 1980 MacBride report titled *Many Voices, One World* found the prevailing idea of a "free flow of information" inadequate, because it served to privilege Western hegemony and cultural diffusion, turning the news recipients in the global South into mere consumers of Western news values, entertainment, and advertising images. The report suggested instead the important qualification of a "free and balanced" flow of communication, which was adopted as leitmotif of UNESCO policy; and it gave recommendations as to how international news coverage could be more properly balanced.

UNESCO funded many of the early milestones in critical international communication research; but, from the mid-1980s on, its focus and rhetoric shifted toward a more neoliberal position and a greater concern with issues revolving around freedom and democratization than with issues related to balanced news coverage and more equal cultural flows. Debate about global media inequality and concern with corporate media globalization and with the threats to local cultures continued into the early twenty-first century at the forums of the MacBride Round Table, in the demand for a People's Communication Charter, and in the activities of the Cultural Environment Movement – a nonprofit international coalition founded in 1996 – as well as at the 2003 and 2005 World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS). In those years many issues of the NWICO returned on the international agenda. But, after the WSIS, those attempts to forge partly non-commercial global communication policies lost momentum (Nordenstreng, 2010).

Criticisms of the Cultural Imperialism Perspective

There are few explicit formulations of cultural imperialism as a theory – that is, of cultural imperialism defined as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and statements that present a systematic view of a phenomenon by specifying relationships

among themselves, with the purpose of explaining the phenomenon in question. Cultural imperialism is most usefully seen as a conceptual framework with hypothesized relationships, a theoretical perspective that attempts to locate and clarify a broad range of issues regarding transnational flows of culture. In terms of taxonomy of mass communication theories (Baran & Davis, 2000), which distinguishes between microscopic, middle-range, and macroscopic theories, cultural imperialism belongs to the third type of theories – those concerned with media's role and their impact on culture and society. Compared to other macroscopic theories of mass communication, "cultural imperialism" has a broad scope. It has been used not only in the field of communication, but also in areas such as international relations, anthropology, education, sciences, history, literature, and sports. In what follows the primary focus will be on cultural imperialism in relation to media and communication.

"Cultural imperialism" is also a critical theory. Like other critical theories – those of the Frankfurt School, or other varieties of neo-Marxism – it consists of "a loose confederation of ideas held together by a common interest in the quality of communication and human life" (Littlejohn, 1999, p. 15). Critical theories operate at the macrolevel (albeit a less specific one) rather than at the microlevel. Cultural imperialism theory focuses on broader issues of transnational media and flows of culture and political economy, while uses and gratifications theory, for example, focuses on individual audience members. Cultural imperialism cannot be studied from a purely positivistic, quantitative perspective. It involves a long-term process, and therefore it cannot rely on "one-shot" analyses. It requires diachronic investigations, including longitudinal analyses with media audience cohorts. Empirical studies of cultural imperialism have deployed both qualitative and quantitative methods, some studies using a triangulation of methods. But the problem remains of how to measure the acceptance of deep-structured meanings that may not even be explicitly verbalized.

The notion of cultural imperialism has come under criticism for a variety of reasons. It has been argued that, in the founding works on cultural imperialism, economic power and cultural impact tend to be conflated. The latter is simply "read off" from empirical evidence about foreign politico-economic interventions in local situations, without a study of the cultural imports and their reception domestically. This tendency is discerned in one of the most frequently cited definitions, namely the one given by US media scholar Herbert Schiller in his seminal *Communication and Cultural Domination*:

> The concept of cultural imperialism … best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system. (Schiller, 1976, p. 9)

Thus Schiller essentially seemed to describe a structural socioeconomic process while referring to it as *cultural* imperialism. The terms used in the definition – "world

system," "social institutions," "structures," and "center" – do not directly address the notion of "culture" in cultural imperialism, with the exception of a reference to the "values" of the center. One should add however that, for Schiller, the carriers of Western cultural influence included communication technologies themselves, which were not value-neutral instruments but imbued with capitalist values; language (evident as English was becoming the global linguistic medium); business practices; the genres as well as their content (soap operas, blockbuster films, popular music, and so on). Moreover, there were other researchers at the time who included culture (understood as a set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioral norms, and also as an overall way of life) more explicitly in their definition of cultural imperialism (Beltrán, 1977, p, 184; Tunstall, 1977, p. 57).

The conventional cultural imperialism argument tended to view cultures as singular, rather solidified, nationally bounded entities, which glossed over their internal diversity and contested nature. It ignored the increasingly significant transnational hybrids and all kinds of transculturalization processes. Opponents of the cultural imperialism thesis have also argued that concerns about negative effects on national or regional cultures or identities deny the possibly liberating effects of US culture on the existing class structures. They pointed out that cultural imperialism's analyses of transplanted culture take a totalizing view, which insufficiently accounts for specificities of region, nation, audience, and so on. Critics also stated that an additional problem with the NWICO discourse of cultural imperialism was that it risked disguising the interests of emergent bourgeoisie classes, which sought to advance their own market power under the banner of national cultural self-determination. Such a framework would encourage cultural imperialism theorists to espouse hierarchical and narrow accounts of culture, which mostly served to foster a stifling parochialism encouraged by cultural bureaucrats (Miller, 2005, pp. 77, 80).

Active Audience Research and Effects of Cultural Transfers

The standard cultural imperialism approach put too much emphasis on the external determinants and undervalued the internal dynamics, not least those of resistance, within dependent societies. It assumed direct, unmediated effects of media content on audience behavior. It tended to ignore the particularities of local cultures and their meaning systems, as well as other processes of modernization, which often occur along with media development. New approaches to the "active audience" within media and cultural studies led to a rethinking of international effects, too. The research conducted by adherents of the "active audience" theory and by proponents of the notion of a "resistance" of audiences is at odds with some of the basic tenets of the traditional cultural imperialism thesis. It argues that cultural consumers, individually and as members of different subgroups, can and do construct their own meanings from media messages and cultural products, thus refuting the central idea of domination through Western, or more particularly American, culture. And, last but not least, this research assumes that a proclivity

toward "resistance" to mass media messages and mass-popular culture products is widespread among many consumers (Miller, 2005; Roach, 1997, p. 52). With regard to international cultural transfer and communication, Liebes and Katz's study of the reception of the American television soap opera *Dallas* in Israel, Japan, and the United States was seminal (Liebes & Katz, 1990). The authors found that across the different cultural groups a variety of interpretive frames led to a multiplicity of readings, including ones that contradicted the allegedly dominant ideology of the series. They concluded that television viewers were likely to interpret cultural and ideological content by using local context and values.

These criticisms of the more deterministic views of cultural flow implicit in a simplistic cultural imperialism model certainly have merit. But they run the risk of adopting an uncritical cultural populism in which the recognition of cultural resistance and of the creative, even subversive power of audiences easily turns into a romantic celebration of the cultural insubordination of consumers. By restricting the analysis and discussion almost exclusively to the reception side of cultural influence, this approach suffers from an overemphasis placed on the selective borrowing and active appropriation of cultural forms, which is deployed at the expense of wider interest in the political economy and cultural constraints set by power inequalities. It must also be noticed that much of the active audience research and related "resistance" argument concerned analyses of reactions to discrete cultural products or, at best, to a particular genre such as the soap opera, when in reality the people concerned were dealing with a "total cultural package," as they were exposed, on a daily basis, to many forms of mass-popular culture. As Herbert Schiller emphasized, "meaningful resistance" was not to be found in audience's reactions to a particular TV program, but rather in concrete cultural struggles that were informed by a critical analysis of larger issues of increasing social inequality (Schiller, 1991, p. 24–26). Furthermore, such reception studies did not examine the influence of commercial broadcasting advertising on cultural practices or consider its impact on the formats of media products.

Sklair makes the important point that this research is mainly focused on a second order of meanings, to be distinguished from the first order of meaning of these media products: the "culture-ideology" of consumerism, which should be the primary concern here. This provides the framework for the second order of meaning, which brings up other, more nuanced and sometimes contradictory issues. The connections between capitalist globalization and the first level are as follows: Goods are framed and displayed so as to entice the customer, and shopping – best exemplified by the shopping mall, merged with the culture of the theme park – has become an openly symbolic event. Images play a central part and are constantly created and circulated by the mass media with a systematic blurring of the lines between information, entertainment, and promotion of products. The acquisition of goods leads to a greater "aestheticization of reality" – appearance and image have become of prime importance, and style itself has turned into a valuable commodity. The end result of the refashioning and reworking of commodities geared to people's individual tastes is a concept

of lifestyle revolving around the enhanced self-image. This overlooks the real distinctions in the capacity to consume and ignores low-income groups, the unemployed, and the elderly, even though the all-pervasive consumerism includes everyone with the potential to buy, however poor, as no one can escape its images. People in developing countries, in post-communist Eastern Europe, and in China (after the 1978 market reforms) have increasingly come under its spell as well (Sklair, 2002, pp. 108–110, 263–270).

Another critical issue is the abundant evidence there is that audiences prefer locally produced content where and when this becomes available (Chadha & Kavoori, 2000; Tunstall, 2007). While some Hollywood blockbusters may have global reach, a major part of media production is now attuned to local – that is, linguistically bounded, sometimes even still nationally bounded – cultural markets, according to the adage "think global, produce local." Regional linguistic–cultural markets are growing in economic significance as the "cultural proximity" of local cultural preference makes itself felt. This can produce regional exchanges of news and television programming, but it can also lead to localized versions of "cultural imperialism" – as in the concern about India's cultural dominance over the South-Asian subcontinent (Sreberny, 2001, pp. 9491–9492). More recently, Tunstall has noted that US media companies, especially Hollywood movies and TV series, garner large foreign revenues but are no longer dominant in terms of market share of audience time (Tunstall, 2007, p. 3). Indeed he argues that, across the world, people desire to consume their own national and/or regional media, on the basis of a preference for their own national culture and language.

Counterflows and Regional Flows of Culture

Cultural imperialism thinking emerged at a time of comparative mass media scarcity and recently established broadcasting systems in the global South. But by the late twentieth century there were many significant cultural industries in the South, as regional centers of media production had arisen and/or expanded in such places as India, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, China, and Hong Kong, along with regional geocultural markets for their cultural products. At the same time that global distribution networks emerged under the control of commercial media conglomerates, media production became less tied to a few core metropolises. Furthermore, regional operations such as Televisa in Mexico, Global TV in Brazil, India Sky Broadcasting and Zee Telefilms in India were acquired by, or entered into joint ventures with, transnational giants such as News Corporation. This amalgamation of ever-growing media conglomerates – CNN (Cable News Network), Star TV, CNBC (Consumer News and Business Channel), MSNBC (Microsoft National Broadcasting Company), MTV (Music Television), and the like – operating in tandem with regional distribution networks and media production centers has created an unprecedented global market penetration. Given this multifaceted and commercial globalization, the idea of cultural imperialism as

rooted in the discourse of international relations of dominance and dependence is less simply or directly applicable (Griffin, 2002).

A substantial part of scholarship has moved away from a primary focus on Western, or more particularly American, cultural influence to "peripheral" countries, examining flows of culture across and among regions and countries that had not drawn much empirical attention until the 1990s. This research has focused on counterflows of culture from developing and/or comparatively less politically and economically powerful countries such as South Africa, India, and South Korea into core countries such as the USA, the UK, and France. It is also interested in South–South flows, for instance cultural flows among countries like Tanzania, Indonesia, and Brazil, and also inequalities in these flows.

Critical questions about the cultural imperialism thesis have further been raised in relation to emerging societies such as China and Brazil because of their size and resources. Both countries have substantial domestic audiences, strong cultural traditions, and resources relatively proportional to their size. Having the world's largest population, a strong economic growth rate (at least until the recent Great Recession), a nuclear arsenal, and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, China is reaching superpower status. Having Latin America's largest economy and its dominant military forces, along with a population close to 175 million and a thriving tradition of television dramas (telenovelas), Brazil is another emerging giant. The cases of China and Brazil have stimulated new theoretical debates. For example, in examining Brazil, Joseph Straubhaar introduced a reinterpretation of Galtung's concept of "asymmetrical interdependence" (Galtung, 1971) as a characteristic of international media relations, whereby countries have multiple relationships and different degrees of political, economic, and cultural power (Straubhaar, 1991).

Sklair has criticized the suggestion that the enormous success of telenovelas in Latin America began to reverse media imperialism by sending Spanish-language programs to US Latino audiences, and later even to wider ones. This conclusion is only true if one adopts the state centrism inherent in the classic theory of cultural and media imperialism. The popularity of those TV series demonstrates the triumph of consumerism inherent in the first-order meaning of these shows, no matter whether the shows themselves are produced by South or North Americans. Similar tendencies can be found in "pro-development soap operas" where the message of the "American" or "Western" way of life (confusingly intermingled with elements borrowed from Latin America, China, India, Japan, and so on) has been transmitted to people in the Third World (Sklair, 2002, pp. 170–174).

Cultural Globalization Rather Than Cultural Imperialism?

Understandably, the role of the media and communications is often discussed in terms of cultural globalization. The media have a central place in communication for three major reasons: first, media corporations have increasingly globalized their operations; second, global communication infrastructures facilitate the global

information flow; and, finally, global media play a key role in how to view events across the world so as to develop shared systems of meaning (Flew, 2007). Cultural globalization emerged as an increasingly influential perspective in the 1980s, in response to what many critics charged were the overly deterministic assumptions of cultural imperialism. Thus, much research carried out from a globalization of culture perspective emphasized the localization and adaptation of cultural goods and services in particular cultures and markets and/or the creative local appropriation of those cultural products. This perspective conceives of culture as highly fluid, malleable, and fundamentally hybrid. Its protagonists also stress that "cultural globalization" lacks the intentionality implicit in the cultural imperialism thesis (which, as noted earlier, is not necessary to it). The notion of "traveling cultures" has a particularly powerful impact on current approaches to cultural globalization (Clifford, 1997). The "traveling cultures" idea focuses on how cultural languages travel to new areas and are appropriated by people of other cultures as they tell their own story, a process that transcends stable, unified national cultures. This approach looks almost exclusively at the receiving end of these encounters, and as a result it tends to overemphasize the active appropriation of cultural forms and to neglect cultural imposition through behavioral and structural forms of power. A more complete transcultural perspective should also encompass and study the economic, technological, political, and social–structural constraints on the exchanges concerned.

A second flaw in the "traveling cultures" theory of cultural globalization is its neglect of the nation-state. Despite the growing importance of transnational corporations and other nongovernmental organizations, the state has not declined to the extent assumed by proponents of transculturation. Nation and territory still make a difference, even in this era of enhanced globalization. These conventional political units remain as yet important, operating either in the form of modern nation-states or as "global cities," where global processes carried by corporate complexes and supporting specialized services (financing, accounting, information processing, and the like) actually take place. These global cities are strategic places embedded in national territories and therefore remain, at least partly, in the judicial orbit of various state-centered regulatory systems. The relationship between capitalism and territoriality has changed, but it remains governed by inter-state bodies as yet dominated by the G8, with growing clout of a new grouping of developing counties: the G20, led by Brazil, South Africa, China, and India.

Yet the growing importance of electronic space in the global economy and the accompanying "virtualization" of economic activities do raise questions of control in the global economy that go not only beyond the state but also beyond current notions of non-state-centered systems of coordination. Private digital networks bring along forms of power that differ from the more widely distributed power associated with public digital networks. The vastly expanded global capital market that emerged in the 1980s has the structural power and organizational connections with national economies to make its requirements felt in national economic policymaking. But the supranational electronic market space, which partly operates

outside any government's exclusive jurisdiction, is only one of the spaces for finance. There is also the embeddedness of global finance in the environments of actual financial centers, places where national laws continue to be operative, although they often entail greatly modified laws (Sassen, 2006, pp. 336–338).

It cannot be denied that the analysis of contemporary cultural flows and hybrid forms demands a more sophisticated framework than that of the conventional cultural imperialism thesis. However, the arguments of the cultural globalization discourse tend to be too general and ungrounded in concrete settings. This makes the cultural globalization approach ill suited for a critical understanding of the cultural power issues implicated in contemporary hybrid cultures. Much work focused on localization, "polysemy" (literally "many meanings"), and hybridization has tended to ignore questions such as how polysemic cultural texts are, or which cultural actors contribute more of the ingredients to a given cultural hybrid text (Morley, 1997). "Reading" diversity also offers little insight into processes that determine which cultural meanings become widely disseminated and which do not. Moreover, a singular focus on local reception and cultural hybridity may obscure the encroachment of corporate and regulatory agencies, models, and values associated with the global economy (Boyd-Barrett, 2006, p. 22).

The Problematic Concept of "Cultural Loss"

In this context John Tomlinson's arguments against the utility of the cultural imperialism thesis in a globalizing world deserve attention, because of their widespread positive reception among scholars and policymakers (Tomlinson, 1991). Instead of cultural imperialism, he prefers to use the concept of "cultural loss," which does not presuppose the existence of a coercive power relation in order to describe the phenomenon in question. Anthopologist Balmurli Natrajan (2003) has criticized Tomlinson for adopting a concept of culture that operates to mask the actual meaning underlying current protests against globalization by the global social justice movement. Natrajan noticed that Tomlinson's arguments are based on "a peculiar understanding of the concept of culture," which Tomlinson defined initially as "the context within which people give meanings to their actions and experiences, and make sense of their lives" (Tomlinson, 1991, p. 7). Tomlinson thereby distinguishes cultural practices in this sense and economic practices that deal with the distribution of, and struggle over, power. In a later work he refined his use of culture to include all these "mundane practices that directly contribute to people's ongoing 'life-narratives,' the stories by which we chronically interpret our existence in what Heidegger calls the 'throwness of the human situation'" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 20; Natrajan, 2003, p. 225).

Tomlinson's claim that the anti-globalization protests are ultimately prompted by an individually and collectively experienced sense of cultural loss rather than by a sense of imposition fails to grasp the fact that the most compelling protests are about losing entire contexts of politics, economics, and culture. Following Anthony

Giddens's view of the cultural consequences of late modernity, Tomlinson attributes cultural loss to the "cultural weakness" of capitalist modernity, which is unable to solve the problems that the material effects of capitalism bring about. Such problems would ultimately involve "a need not for material well-being or political emancipation, but a specifically cultural need to be able to decide how we will live collectively in the widest possible sense…" (Tomlinson, 1991, p. 169). Natrajan asserted that Tomlinson's understanding of culture as a "context for meaning production" rather than as "meaning production in context" tends to isolate narratives of meaning from their political economy and enables an obscuring of the coercion that is inherent in capitalist globalization. Thus this usage of the concept of loss culminates in "*culturalizing* protests – making protests *denote* the cultural but only after emptying culture of politics (making culture purely existential) and economy (making culture immaterial)" (Natrajan, 2003, p. 227). Natrajan also suggested that the peculiarly postmodern sense of "cultural loss" encountered in the legitimating narratives of what was experienced by privileged groupings – such as transnational CEOs and their local affiliates, globalizing state officials, politicians and professionals, and consumerist elites – is unduly depicted as a general experience of all classes of people.

What becomes clear from this discussion is that the shortcomings of the conventional cultural imperialism perspective do not warrant a wholesale rejection. Several leading proponents of the cultural imperialism thesis (including Boyd-Barrett and Mattelart) have acknowledged the need to revise the dominance perspective and to recognize the notion of hybridity. This reflects a more nuanced understanding of culture within the political economy tradition (Mosco & Schiller, 2001) and a fusion of political economy and cultural studies approaches (Miller, 2005). The evolution of this debate represents a redirection of emphasis rather than a paradigm shift. This process also includes a growing interest in the culture and communication dimensions of social justice, human rights, global civil society, and the transnational public sphere (Braman & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996; Thussu, 1998).

The Intertwinement of Globalization and Americanization

The nature of the relationship between globalization and Americanization remains a critical issue. The United States was the driving force of globalization broadly from 1945 to 2000 (in two major phases: the postwar boom and the period from 1980 to 2000). During this period globalization was more or less identical with Westernization and Americanization. US cultural influence was not limited to products of the cultural industries or to media imperialism. It also included cultural components at the heart of capitalist globalization, such as state and business culture, management and labor practices (including those of the media and other cultural industries), and "development policies" for developing countries. There

can be little doubt that US corporate capitalism shaped the period of neoliberalism from 1980 to 2000. This process was not simply a reflection of US corporate or state power. To be sure, external pressures put heavy constraints on the policy options deemed acceptable by national elites in other countries. But like-mindedness and willful acceptance played a role as well. This also involved dissimilar geographical developments, and there were limits to America's global reach. The globalization of American law in tandem with economic liberalization and political fragmentation undermined traditional approaches to regulation and generated functional pressures and political incentives to shift toward US legal styles (Kelemen & Sibbitt, 2004). This kind of Americanization was also manifest in the neoliberal emphasis of the policies that agencies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization promoted in the developing world – or, according to critics, imposed on it.

As Herbert Schiller stated in 1991, due to changes in the international geopolitical arena (challenges to USA's prominence by other Western powers and the break-up of the Soviet Union), the US dominance in international communications and cultural markets was now better understood as a "transnational corporate cultural dominance" with more players from Europe and Asia, although the United States was still the leader – and by far: "The difference today is that national (large American) media-cultural power has been largely (though not fully) subordinated to transnational corporate authority." Yet, the then existing domination still had a marked American imprint in Schiller's view:

> Philips of the Netherlands, Lever Brothers of Britain, Daimler-Benz of Germany, Samson of Korea, and Sony of Japan, along with some few thousand other companies, are now the major players of the international market. The media, public relations, advertising, polling, cultural sponsorship, and consultants these industrial giants use and support hardly are distinguishable from the same services at the disposal of American-owned corporations. Still, a good fraction of these international–cultural activities continue to be supplied by American enterprises. (Schiller, 1991, pp. 13–16)

The cultural transfers in question entailed both processes of "traveling culture," in which the imported, globalizing capitalist culture was appropriated and assigned new meaning locally, while at the same time the first-order meaning of the culture's ideology of consumerism came to dominate and delimit the space for sociopolitical alternatives, thus retaining a core element of the traditional denotation of cultural imperialism. The central problem was not the spread of cultural uniformity as such, or the creation of a "false consciousness" among consumers and the adoption of a version of the dominant ideology thesis. Rather it lay in the global spread of the institutions of capitalist modernity and in the associated social imagery that crowded out the cultural and political space for alternative versions of the good life and a better society. This involved, first and foremost, social visions of US-style development, with its hubristic emphasis on "progress" in the form of unlimited quantitative growth and economic–technological expansion, along with the

culture of performance and extremely expressive and acquisitive individualism prevalent in American society (van Elteren, 2003, pp. 180–184).

Oliver Boyd-Barrett has argued that the framework of media imperialism is appropriate for the study of US dominance in information and communication technology (ICT) industries throughout the period 1975–2000. He pointed out that early media imperialism thinking concentrated specifically on US television exports and emerged at a time when such exports were on the point of decline in many local markets. "Covert influences," including ownership, business models, professional values, content formatting, audience preferences and technologies, were insufficiently examined. The earlier focus on television and media content – also the primary target of critiques of media imperialism – tended to distract from the development of ICT industries and the strong impact these have exerted on US economic and foreign policies (Boyd-Barrett, 2006). Boyd-Barrett provided empirical evidence for the continuing dominance of US-based transnational computing and telecommunications industries within the global economy at the turn of the twenty-first century, but he also signaled the significance of the "Asian challenge," specifically of Asian ICT activity, for the prospects of a continuation of US hegemony.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, the American lead slipped away and the financial crisis of 2007–2008 marked the end of US economic and political hegemony. Taken together, these events opened the door to an era of multipolarity: a "post-American world" has begun to evolve. In its latest stage, globalization is not just Westernization but also Easternization, as manifested in the influence of Japan on management systems, car manufacture, cuisine, fashion, and animation films – and more generally in East Asian forms of capitalism (Nederveen Pieterse, 2010, pp. 102–103). Moreover, the "West" is not unified. As emerging configurations, the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and formations such as "Chime" (China, India, the Middle East) are becoming increasingly important; new cultural patterns, fashions, fusions, and mixtures are taking shape. The emerging societies owe their growth, to a large extent, to their export to developed countries, which means that they habitually attune their businesses to markets and sensibilities in the West, even as domestic and regional demands become important too. Moreover, other major relationships are developing between emerging societies – with their growing demand for raw materials, from iron ore to rubber – and commodities-exporting countries and regions. Along with the differentiated impact of regional and global financial–economic crises, these two kinds of relationships will put their stamp on the global political economy in the coming years. They also represent two major maelstroms of hybridization: South–North; and East–South or South–South (Nederveen Pieterse, 2009, pp. 22–23).

The early 2000s witnessed the relative market decline of the US hold over foreign media firms, content, and audiences. As Tunstall points out, media companies are owned by a multitude of global rather than US players. National media industries are dominant worldwide, and US media have a relatively small market share in other countries where national media are dominant (Tunstall, 2007).

However, when it comes to the continued global dissemination of consumerism, the national or ethnic origins of the agents of media control do not matter. The point is not whether foreigners or nationals control the media or other carriers of cultural globalization, but whether their interests are driven by capitalist globalization. It is incorrect to identify the cultural or media imperialism as understood here simply with the United States, or even with US capitalism. Even if US influence could be excluded, cultural and media imperialism would not vanish. Americanization is not essential to capitalist globalization, but it is a *contingent* form of a process that is necessary to it: the worldwide spread of the value system of consumerism (Sklair, 2002, pp. 112–113, 169).

Retaining the Critical Core of "Cultural Imperialism"

The thesis of cultural imperialism must be reconceptualized and made to focus not only on the ideological, but also on the simulation of ways of life, as a more subtle form of cultural influence. This area, where the thesis of cultural imperialism is transformed into transnational commercialization, is important for understanding the role of the media in the context of contemporary globalization. The creation of transnational media industries and the transnational flow of information, entertainment, and advertising that they produce establish an increasingly ubiquitous repertoire and frame of reference for global–local interactions. These resources for social interaction and cultural expression are not unlimited in form and substance and put constraints on media formats and content, which channel imaginary possibilities toward routine consumption patterns. The local penetration of symbols and aesthetic forms of transnational media systems and the accompanying formation of new audiences, markets, and consumer groups involve the (further) transnational commodification of social life. The system of neoliberal capitalism is itself dependent on myths of the market as panacea, since dreams of future acquisition, upward social mobility, and cultural and personal autonomy are spreading and affecting – in varying degrees – people in virtually every part of the world.

As yet, these imagined worlds of consumption retain traces of "American" lifestyle patterns, mixed with or superimposed on local content. Contemporary global commodification is best conceived of as the steadily increasing participation of peoples across regional, national, and local boundaries in such imaginary cultural landscapes. These "imagined communities" of consumption and aspiration are to a great degree shaped by well-orchestrated transnational corporate marketing practices. The basic issues now concern the role that global media systems are playing in propagating a particular pattern of commercial rather than civic culture, and how specific communities respond to these commercial media models and resources through particular forms of cultural accommodation, hybridization, and resistance (Griffin, 2002). There is a need for a larger set of case studies that explore these implications of transnational and transcultural media. These studies must move beyond issues of media concentration, asymmetrical flows, and second-order

meanings of media content, to include analyses of the commercialization of transnational media across local settings and of how the associated beliefs of consumerism are received in multicultural contexts.

A critical social–emancipatory approach to studying transnational cultural transfers upholds human egalitarianism as an ideal, which means working toward a more egalitarian global cultural field. This does *not* involve a preoccupation with attempts to preserve "pure" national culture, or particular national identities or entities. It entails a broader appeal to the social significance of providing individuals and groups with a context of empowerment, in which they are enabled to "make their own history." This means giving them as equal an opportunity as possible to actualize "self-determination" – that is, to create their own identities, practices, and forms of expression – along with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the larger collective practices and forms of expression that circulate in the global cultural arena (Demont-Heinrich, 2011).

For a good understanding of the power issues concerned, it is important to view cultures as syntheses of hybrid components that are shaped by structural and discursive forces. Analyses that focus on hybridity in media texts or popular culture products often minimize the importance of structural issues. In this kind of studies, hybrid texts tend to be explained as manifestations of cultural pluralism, not as possible indicators of cultural dominance. A problem in analyzing such structural constraints is that the boundaries between "domestic" and "foreign" cultural influences are not always clearly demarcated. Hybrid media texts reflect the existence of a variety of historical, economic, and cultural forces whose intertwinings are visible at the local, national, and regional levels, as well as globally. A singular focus on the media is insufficient for us to comprehend these complex relations. Rather one needs to situate the media in their broader societal context and to unravel the various links, processes, and effects between communication practices and social, political, and economic forces. A growing tendency toward the "translocal," "transnational," and "transcultural" does not exclude that a single nation-state, or a combination of states or group of social actors (e.g., transnational corporations), has more control over the emergent "trans"-system than another. The condition of "transculturality" is likely to be different – and sometimes dramatically so – for various groups of people around the world who are positioned differently vis-à-vis this social phenomenon. The major challenge is to most effectively understand and theorize this "power-geometry" while keeping the question of inequality clearly in mind.

It remains helpful to think of the global and the local in terms of various mutual interplays. But it should then also be recognized that the local itself is pervaded by power and inequality and is often the site of power struggles between local actors who are themselves embedded in larger external networks (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008). This leads to an increased focus on connections between several social spaces and on exploring local-to-local links. The situation involves a reformulation of Galtung's (1971) "wheel model" of cultural imperialism – in which the hub and rim are metaphors for, respectively, the center and the

periphery – by shifting the focus on connections between several points on the rim of the wheel without coming to it with a pre-established view that such connections must necessarily run from the hub and through the spokes. This means moving beyond the conventional analyses of cultural flows, in which, typically, the United States is positioned at the center of cultural exchanges and all other countries are in various peripheral positions. In contrast, a translocal perspective calls for an analysis of how these different nations' hybrid cultures are shaped by their mutual interactions, in addition to their links with the West and specific parts thereof. It implies, at least analytically, a removal of the West from the center of intercultural relations and a greater emphasis on local-to-local, East-to-East or South-to South interactions and exchanges. Asymmetrical relations are indeed relative; culture flows are not entirely one way, while the world is criss-crossed by more symmetrical relationships as well. There are various centers and several kinds of center rather than only one; and centers also rise and decline.

The proposed conceptualization assumes that hybridity is always permeated by power; yet it does not adopt the idea that hybridization leads by definition to a generalized hegemonic outcome. While most hybridities tend to be structured in a context of unequal power relations, the resulting hybrid forms and identities do not necessarily reflect total dominance. Furthermore, while some, perhaps the most powerful, political–economic structures are transnational, it remains worthwhile to pay attention to the role of the state as a regulator of media and communication processes that shape hybridity. Even if the state's economic prerogatives have been eroding under globalization, the state retains most of its political, legal, regulatory, and military power. In these domains the national state mediates between the global and the local, but also between various local social spaces. By focusing on the state's role of mediating between the global and the local, one may discern a possibly positive role in its administering of the local cultural diversity within the national space through particular media and cultural policies (Kraidy, 2005, pp. 155–160).

It appears that the most appropriate approach to transnational cultural transfers would situate the local, creative appropriation of cultural objects against the backdrop of the larger regional and global macro forces that play a significant role in the question of which cultural objects are widely available in which particular cultural contexts, and which are not. And, while it is crucial to pay attention to the widespread localization of cultural products – that is, to undeniable cultural differences – it is equally important to pay close attention to similarities and to homogenization. This means examining in greater depth the ways in which the macrosociological processes and forces of globalization impinge on, and are shaped by, the micro practices of everyday life in particular local settings. It is ultimately in the social practices at these contact zones and intersections that imperialistic cultural influence, if existent, is to be located. The challenge is not to lean too far toward either a macro- or a micro-level perspective, but to deploy an integrative approach that simultaneously takes both into account.

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23

Al Jazeera Remaps Global News Flows

Catherine Cassara

Introduction

Al Jazeera has fundamentally changed the news topography of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and in the process it has fundamentally altered the dimensions of public discussion and debate in the region. It has been credited with teaching the region what it knows about freedom of the press and democracy. Not a few analysts have attributed the origins of the Arab uprising to Al Jazeera's impact on a region that learned other ways of thinking about power and governance from this defiant alternative to state broadcasting operations controlled by the region's monarchies, dictatorships, and hereditary presidencies (Conte, 2007; Gizbert, 2011; Hasan, 2011; Seib, 2005, p. 612). Al Jazeera changed what people in the MENA saw and learned of their own countries and what people in the world beyond learned about the region. In changing the pictures and stories people had access to, the channel changed the questions they asked, their approaches to telling their own stories, and their expectations. Through Al Jazeera English (AJE), the channel opened the MENA to the world, but not without opening the global South to its residents and to the world beyond.

Al Jazeera's emergence as a global news powerhouse has been marked by a mountain of accolades. In 2012 Al Jazeera received the International Four Freedoms Award for "its steadfast commitment to freedom of the press and its longstanding efforts to provide independent, impartial news for an international audience" (Roosevelt Stichting, 2012). The Royal Television Society gave AJE its 2012 award for best news station instead of awarding it to BBC and Sky News. AJE's overall coverage of the Arab Awakening won a 2012 Peabody Award (Associated Press, 2012). AJE's documentary about the Bahraini uprising – "abandoned by the

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Arabs, forsaken by the West and forgotten by the world" – won the 2012 Foreign Press Association Documentary of the Year Award in London, the 2012 George Polk Award for Excellence in Journalism, and the Scripps Howard Jack R. Howard Award for Television Reporting. In 2011 AJE won a 2011 duPont-Columbia award for a documentary on the slow pace of recovery in Haiti (Long Island University, 2012). The Columbia Journalism School gave AJE the 2011 Columbia Journalism Award for "great service in bringing the English speaking world in-depth coverage of the turmoil in the Middle East" (Stanglin, 2011).

In a recognition of a more practical sort, between February and October 2011 the Americans sent more than 70, 000 emails to cable and satellite providers asking for AJE, in large part because US news media were late to the story of the Arab uprising and their coverage, with some notable exceptions, was fleeting and shallow (Tharoor, 2011; WTTW, 2011). Perhaps as a result, four more US markets picked up AJE programming, more than doubling the network's US reach (Villareal, 2011). One of Al Jazeera's most outspoken critics lauded the channel's performance. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told David Frost in October 2011 that AJE "can be an important means of communication in the world and I am delighted you are doing what you are doing" (Shaw, 2011). In December of the same year AJE announced that it had reached 250 million homes – 5 million of those in the US (Villareal, 2011).

When the new emir of Qatar bankrolled Al Jazeera in 1996, he hoped a television news network might increase the standing of his country in the Gulf (Rinnawi, 2006), but it is not so clear that he understood that he was setting in motion a process that would bring about what Rami Khouri described as "the single most important challenge to Western colonial political domination in the modern Arab World" (Gizbert, 2011). This chapter considers the impact Al Jazeera has had on journalism and public life within the Arab world, as well as its impact beyond the region. In particular, it addresses the role the network has played in upsetting Western dominance over global news flows (Figenschou, 2010; Seib, 2005) – a phenomenon overlooked by those still caught up in tired stereotypes of Al Jazeera as a "terrorists' mouthpiece." Given the recent exponential expansion of AJE, the network's long-term impact is hard to assess completely and accurately; still, it cannot be overlooked. Any chapter concerned with global news flows would have to consider AJE because – while it is headquartered in the US – its operations are overwhelmingly based in the global South, it gives primacy to coverage of the developing world, and it deliberately "gives voice to disenfranchised and neglected peoples" (Hasan, 2011).

Myriad scholars have written about Al Jazeera, and this chapter draws on their work rather than reinventing it; also, where possible, the reflections of the Al Jazeera journalists themselves are privileged. These choices arise from the author's own background: the study of international news – particularly news flow research; the study of media history – including media developments beyond the US shores; a fascination with the progress and development of Al Jazeera dating back more than a decade; and, finally, years of work with colleagues in Tunisia and Algeria for whom Al Jazeera has always been serious business.

The chapter reviews the development of the Al Jazeera network, addresses the channel's impact on the news dynamics in the Arab world, and examines Al Jazeera's influence beyond the MENA – particularly what these changes say to theories of international news flow and contra-flow. The chapter ends with an examination of some of the confounding issues that complicate discussions about the Al Jazeera and get in the way of an honest assessment of the network's impacts.

From Lone Channel to Global Network

Al Jazeera was established as a state-owned, independent satellite news channel in 1996, by edict of Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, the British-educated emir who had taken control of the emirate from his father in a palace coup in 1994 (Rinnawi, 2006, p. 98). Even as he was underwriting the station, the emir was eliminating the ministry of information and making a commitment to the free flow of information rather than to its control (Brugmans, Toeset, Wiering, & Films for the Humanities, 2000; Schleifer, 2003). Al Jazeera started off with well-trained Arabic language television news broadcasters, because it started up just as BBC Arabic – the joint venture of the BBC and Saudi Orbit T – collapsed (Rinnawi, 2006).

The new channel's staff built something completely foreign to the region: news with "Anglo-Saxon style," yet with an Arab point of view and sensitivity to Arab culture (Fontana, 2010). These people developed codes of conduct, ethics, and a commitment to independence that would be the hallmark of their work (Ghosh, 2011; Schleifer & Sullivan, 2001). As managers set up their bureaus, they looked first for offices in Arab and Islamic countries where news was happening – starting with Palestine and Iraq; and Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan followed. These decisions made sense in light of the channel's audience demographics; but Al Jazeera journalists were also placed in key locations as events in the Middle East heated up (Schleifer & Sullivan, 2001).

Operation Desert Fox in 1998 started catapulting the network to global prominence because, with staff on the ground in Baghdad and the technology for 24-hour real-time coverage, Al Jazeera had exclusive footage that the world media were hungry to buy (Anthony, 2003). In 1999 the station began 24-hour broadcasting, and in 2000 it added an Arabic website to its lineup. In 2003 an English-language website began to provide news to a global audience. At the end of 2003 the network added Al Jazeera Sports, to make way for more news and public affairs programming on the original channel. By now it had upwards of 1,400 employees, 23 bureaus around the globe, and 450 journalists – 70 of them foreign correspondents (Abt, 2004); and it made it on to Brandchannel's 2004 list of brands with most global impact, coming in fourth place behind Apple, Google, IKEA, and Starbucks (Rusch, 2005).

In 2006 there were 35 million viewers and 30 bureaus worldwide. That year the network pioneered Al Jazeera Mubasher, the first 24-hour live public service news and events channel in the MENA, comparable to the C-SPAN (Cable-Satellite

Public Affairs Network) channels in the US (Al Jazeera Mubasher Stream, n.d.). Later in 2006 the network launced Al Jazeera English, which was based in Washington, DC but had broadcast centers in Doha and London. As American networks cut foreign staff and closed bureaus, AJE hired hundreds of veteran US and British correspondents (Manly, 2006).

In November 2011 Al Jazeera added a Balkan station and began to lay the groundwork for expansion into Turkey. By the start of 2012, the whole network (AJE, AJA, and now AJAM) was employing more than 3,000 staff members across the world in 65 bureaus – most of them "rooted in the global South." More than 400 of those employees were journalists from more than 60 countries, and 1,000 of them, from 50 nationalities, were working for AJE – making its newsroom "among the most diverse in the world" (Al Jazeera, 2012). The report set AJE's audience at 220 million households in more than 100 countries. Additionally, Al Jazeera had become the most watched news channel on YouTube, with 2.5 million views per month.

Impacts in the MENA

Before Al Jazeera, what locally produced news there was in the MENA originated from media organizations owned or controlled by the region's regimes, and what independent news there was came from the West or Israel. Thus the new channel's most immediate impact was due to the fact that it opened a new world. Al Jazeera was the first Arabic language satellite news station. It was the first solely Arab-owned station based in the Middle East. It had Arab reporters. It had the intent to provide independent news and public affairs programming to pan-Arab audiences. And this was deliberate (Schleifer, 2000). Al Jazeera's general manager was addressing a gap in an Arab media market crowded with entertainment, but missing talk shows and news. No one had developed news, because the news in the region was assumed to be censored and government-controlled – which the leaders of Qatar wanted to change (Schleifer, 2000).

Arab regimes hated the new channel because "it broke their stranglehold on freedom of information" (Fenton, 2011, para. 3). What is more, in a region where the government ran, owned, or censored the media (Lank, 2003), the Al Jazeera management recognized early something that eluded other players in the field: Arab audiences were not passive.

> Even when it comes to local news, especially in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria – people don't want to rely on their domestic media for the local news. They get it from Israel, because they trust them more; they're a more reliable source. (Schleifer, 2000, para. 15)

Audience data for Tunisian state television were 80 percent in 1999 but 50 percent by 2003, while viewership for official Saudi TV slipped to 40 percent when there were alternatives (Hammond, 2007, pp. 58–62).

Al Jazeera's graphic Desert Fox footage from Baghdad in 1998 mesmerized Arab viewers and helped trigger anti-American protest across the region. In 2000 the channel's intense coverage of the second Palestinian Intifada and its talk shows, which gave voice to audience angst, secured Al Jazeera's position at the center of Arab political life in the MENA and the diaspora (Lynch, 2005). No longer were MENA audiences reduced to news reports from a "culturally tone deaf" Western media or to coverage from state controlled television (Carney, 2006, p. 6).

Because the channels staff came from across the region and from across its spectrum of cultural, ideological, and religious perspectives, it developed a working style that respected difference and included extensive discussion about problematic stories (Brugmans et al., 2000; Ghosh, 2011; Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007). Most complaints about station content arose from the channel's philosophy – its openness to many sides of a debate, expressed in its motto: "The opinion and the other opinion" (Brugmans et al., 2000). The exemplar of the philosophy is the controversial talk show *The Opposite Opinion*, which brings representatives from widely divergent positions to debate highly controversial issues, such as divorce, homosexuality, women's rights, and whether Islam condones suicide bombing. Guests frequently raise their voices and/or walk off the set. Host Faissal Qassim argues that his show is important exactly because it challenges unhealthy power hierarchies that dominate life in the MENA (Hakem et al., 2002). But he had no illusions about how welcome the exercise was: "The program is creating a hell of a lot of troubles for the Qatari government. I know most Arab governments have protested against the program … but … I don't think we are going to be deterred" (Brugmans et al., 2000).

While his show is criticized for being vulgar and alleged to sharpen divisions within the MENA (Ayish, 2005, p. 124; Fanning et al., 2007), Qassim, a lawyer by training, is not deterred. He suggests that heated public discussion of existing disagreements is better than pretending that such divisions do not exist. If shouting is a respected tradition in the British Parliament, he sees no reason to pretend that political discussion in the Middle East is always polite (UAE students, 2008). Qassim's show is popular with viewers in part because the audience can call in and participate. The network staff supports it but may not like it. "I think it is good, though I don't think it is a good program. …What they say is not worthy, but the fact they can say it is a major statement" (Brugmans et al., 2000).

Analysts suggest that Al Jazeera should be commended for having supported both the work of former London bureau chief Yousri Fouda and the work of its news staff, because their "daily reporting … has done far more for developing an informed public opinion than most talk shows put together" (Schleifer, 2001, para. 18). Fouda said his monthly investigative documentary *Top Secret* was a challenge because it introduced a new kind of journalism to the MENA – one that used a new way of evaluating evidence. Since Arab culture is poetic and linguistic, while investigative reporting relies on objectivity and on a scientific approach to evaluating information, Fouda said he had to write the program to make his case on the basis of science, but in the language that would speak to his audience

(Hakem et al., 2002). Fouda's show was part of "the emergence of a unique trend in investigative journalism," which brought it home to MENA audiences that some journalists had begun to act as unfettered professionals, pushing open the "doors of public discourse" (Iskandar, 2007).

Al Jazeera journalists frequently encountered conflict with Middle Eastern regimes, used as these were to domestic journalists who could be controlled (Ghosh, 2011). They were regularly harassed, their credentials were withdrawn, sometimes they were arrested, and/or their offices in one country or another were closed. Sometimes, when a particular program was coming, a country went out of its way to block access. On January 27, 1999 several Algerian cities, including the capital Algiers, lost power simultaneously, reportedly to keep residents from watching an Al Jazeera program in which Algerian dissidents implicated the Algerian military in a series of massacres (Rugh, 2004, p. 233). In 2003 the network was being praised by the London-based Index on Censorship for circumventing censorship and contributing to the free exchange of information in the Arab world (Zap2It, 2003). Countries leaders pressured the emir to rein in the channel's staff. Their grievances with Al Jazeera had to do not only with what the channel carried and with how far it could reach, but also the fact that it reached literate and illiterate alike, including rural residents and women (Sakr, 2001). Less educated and less well-off viewers tended to watch the channel more, "despite the fact that Al Jazeera and other pan-Arab station center on complex political issues communicated in an elevated style" (Mellor, 2007).

Al Jazeera correspondents have stuck to their independent journalism and they work through all the difficulties, because they considered it their mission (Hakem et al., 2002; Shihata, 2011). If network news policy angers and antagonizes, it may be exactly because its coverage is balanced (Abt, 2004). Al Jazeera talk shows were the only place in the Middle East where Ariel Sharon, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, and Condoleezza Rice all found outlets for their points of view and had a chance to sit and talk at length about their policies and plans (Brugmans et al., 2000; Fanning et al., 2007; Hakem et al., 2002). It was also the only place where Arab audiences "saw and heard Israelis – speaking freely, frequently, live and unedited" (Burman, 2011).

The Al Jazeera staff reported a firewall between the ministry, the palace, and the network, which has not been breached no matter how stiff the outside pressure on the royal family; and, for their part, Qatari officials say that, when diplomats complain about the Al Jazeera, they throw up their hands and point out that the network is independent of their control (Brugmans et al., 2000; Hakem et al., 2002; Noujaim et al., 2004). The first member of the royal family appointed to head the network took over in September 2011. Three months into the job, Ahmed Bin Jassim Al Thani announced extensive efforts to streamline the network's corporate structure and sought to sharpen strategic planning, increase efficiency, and decrease bureaucracy (Al Jazeera network announces corporate restructuring, n.d.). Less than two years later, as Al Thani resigned to take the post of minister of economy and trade under the new emir, his email to network staff

noted that the network had the largest news gathering network globally, that its programs had expanded into innovative formats, and that its content was recognized as world class (Weprin, 2013). He was replaced as director general of the Al Jazeera Media Network by Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani, who had served on the network's board. Whether these leadership changes mark a change in attitude toward the content is hard to tell. Members of staff in Egypt and at the AJE offices reported not only a bias in their network's coverage of the Muslim Brotherhood interference, but also interference as they were doing their jobs (Al Jazeera employees complain of editorial bias with Egypt coverage, n.d.). The outgoing director general, Wadah Khanfar, said that his replacement has the managerial skills the growing operation needs and is too smart to interfere with the network's legendary independence (Ghosh, 2011).

Without question, one of Al Jazeera's most significant contributions was the space it created in the MENA for other Arab-language broadcasting operations, what Zayani calls "the clones," and with it a hyper-competitive news market, independent web sites, and loosened restrictions on print media (Zayani, 2006). "The clones" were underwritten by political interests who "hated" Al Jazeera, and – having given up their efforts to silence the channel – opted instead for creating completion, which they hoped would compete with the Qatari station without actually being so independent (Shihata, 2011). In the process, Fouda said, they let out of the bottle a media genius that would not be recaptured (Shihata, 2011).

The largest clone, Al Arabiya, was launched in 2003 by the MBC (Middle East Broadcasting Center), a Saudi-backed conglomerate based in Lebanon. While the announced intention for Al Arabiya was to compete head to head with Al Jazeera, observers doubted that its staff would ever feel independent, given its Saudi owners (Feuilherade, 2003). Four years later, Al Arabiya's general manager was convinced that his channel was winning the pitched battle with Al Jazeera, demonstrating that journalism "without Bin Laden" could win; but Gallup poll results in Saudi Arabia had Al Arabiya second to Al Jazeera (Fanning et al., 2007; Rheault, 2007). Similar preferences are borne out by other studies. During the 2006 war in Lebanon, when many organizations were competing to cover the conflict, researchers found that Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya were the most popular sources of news – always in that order (Kalb & Saivetz, 2007).

Pintak argues that what Al Jazeera offered the MENA was not just an introduction to freedom of ideas and thought, but also a shared imagined public space or community. Like Zayani, he contends that Arab satellite television has had a revolutionizing effect on the media and that combining television, Internet, and other digital forms of communication "is fueling the rise of a new common Arab consciousness" (Pintak, 2009a, pp. 191–192; Zayani, 2006), although not all analysts and observers accept this idea. Perhaps more importantly, much of the audience that now makes up the "Arab street" turns to Al Jazeera as its touchstone, whether academics recognize it or not (Hakem et al., 2002; Lynch, 2012; Pintak, 2009b). In a prescient observation before the Arab uprising, Qassim noted that, if the region did not have democracy, it might have to start with free media.

"Let us say democracy will come to the Arab world through the media and not vice versa" (Fanning et al., 2007).

All Tunisians knew of a six-month uprising in 2008 that went nowhere because it got no coverage. Thus, on that December afternoon in Sidi Bouzid, after Mohamed Boazizi set himself on fire, when his mother went to the municipal building to protest, friends and family went along with cellphone cameras rolling. Later that evening the video was up on Facebook and out to the world. Al Jazeera was scanning Facebook that night; it picked up the video and ran it immediately on the Mubasher channel (Ryan, 2011). From then on, as the Tunisian hinterland stood up to Ben Ali, the rest of the country kept track either via computer or via Al Jazeera TV. When the story got to Al Jazeera, the network sent it back to Tunisian viewers, who were hungry for news (El Bour, personal email from 2011). When the uprising started, Facebook penetration in Tunisia is estimated to have been between 16 and 19 percent (Blachere, 2011). It was not enough to have social media, it was also necessary to have the people in the streets and the traditional media was needed to magnify the story (Simmons, 2011).

Khanfar insists that Al Jazeera did not cause the Arab uprising but simply covered it (Hasan, 2011). He is probably both right and wrong. In the immediate temporal proximity to the revolutions and uprisings, Al Jazeera was only one of many players, and not sufficient to have brought about the changes that caused the uprisings. However, when analysts have the time, distance, data, and perspective to assess causation with some semblance of certainty, it is hard not to expect that Al Jazeera's introduction of information, news, and public affairs programming was one of the fundamental causes of the geopolitical shifts in the MENA that produced a new generation – a generation with ideas about life that went beyond autocracy and with a willingness to act toward those goals. Combine the contribution of regional re-education with the network's contribution of a thorough and thoughtful coverage of the protest and contest of the legitimacy of oligarchy and autocracy across the region, and the answer may be more complicated than Khanfar's response.

Almost as the Jasmine Revolution happened, Western journalists and analysts dismissed the importance of the Tunisian events and moved on to Egypt, as if there were little of interest to be learned from such a small country like Tunisia. What Westerners missed was that the contagion ignited in Tunisia was not about the use of social media for revolution, but rather about the giving up fear and deciding to stand up to dictatorship and declare "Enough!" This message was communicated by videos carried across the Arab world by Al Jazeera from one uprising to the next; and with each uprising one found protestors crediting Tunisians as their inspiration. Lynch provides a perfect description of

> an Al Jazeera broadcast where they would show a split screen, six different Arab capitals and every single one of them you would have huge numbers of people holding up the identical posters, chanting the same slogans, all in real time. (Simon, 2012)

The value of Al Jazeera's coverage was demonstrated in again Egypt. The government closed its offices, pulled its correspondents' credentials, arrested and harassed them. Finally, NileSat broke its contractual agreement and stopped carrying Al Jazeera satellite transmission back into Egypt; but the ban was irrelevant. Ten of the other Arabic broadcasters stepped forward and volunteered to carry Al Jazeera's signal, which was suddenly available everywhere (Miles, 2011).

Predictably, perhaps, not everyone in the MENA believes in Al Jazeera as the great purveyor of democracy and freedom. In the 1990s regimes threatened by Al Jazeera's unrestricted coverage of affairs in their countries appealed to the emir to rein in his creation. Those appeals were met with shrugs and with the explanation that the station was an independent operation (Shihata, 2011). In the months of the awakening the regimes were said to have been back pressuring the Qatari royal family to rein in the Al Jazeera journalists (Gizbert, 2011). Resistance came from the other end of the spectrum as well. Pockets of people believe that Al Jazeera served US and Western interests in the region because it provides an outlet for the expression of rampant anti-Americanism, in a manner that prolongs Arab weakness and upholds the status quo (Sakr, 2007, p. 124). One has only to watch a YouTube video from January 2012 showing students on the Manouba University campus outside Tunis kicking out a reporter who represented what they considered "the imperialist mouthpiece Al Jazeera" and to follow it up on the web to find out that the sentiment is still alive (ImomineX, 2011).

Impacts Beyond the MENA

From the beginning, Al Jazeera changed the dynamics of global journalism by making accessible images from international hotspots that might otherwise have been unavailable; and it privileged in its news the images and stories of the historically marginalized people, as it covered international news stories with the interests of its own audiences in mind. Al Jazeera has challenged the CNN and other Western news operations' monopoly on global news coverage, specifically in the Middle East, Africa, and other places where audiences and broadcasters seek an alternative view of world events; but it has also become a routine source for Western news organizations – a source of both information and images from parts of the world where those organizations either never had reporting staff or closed their bureaus (Cassara & Lengel, 2004). Particularly with the advent of AJE, the network has been expanding as others cut back (Burman, 2011).

The Taliban offered CNN, Reuters, and APTN (Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network) bureaus in Afghanistan, but none of the Western organizations thought the country was newsworthy, so in October 2001 Al Jazeera was the only news network with people on the ground in Kabul and Kandahar (Schleifer & Sullivan, 2001; Shihata, 2011). Thus Al Jazeera's Teyssir Allouni became the only channel of access to news from Afghanistan, and the network's footage secured coverage of the bombing campaign and of the actions of the Taliban for the whole world

(Hakem et al., 2002). Most significantly, while the United States claimed that no civilians were being killed in the bombings, Al Jazeera's graphic footage showing the human cost of the war, including the results of allied bombing, contradicted those claims (Burman, 2011). When Al Jazeera's coverage showed the widespread civilian casualties of the initially indiscriminate bombing of Kandahar, it was clear the US military was watching, because the impact was immediate: by the next day the bombing was much more carefully targeted (Hakem et al., 2002).

The channel's scoop with its Afghanistan coverage was followed by Osama Bin Laden's choice of Al Jazeera as the outlet for his videotaped messages to world. From that moment Al Jazeera had become the "Arab CNN" (Reaves, 2001). The network aired only carefully selected, newsworthy segments of the tapes and argued that it did only what any other 24-hour news channel that received such tapes would have done (Al Jazeera, 2011). When Al Jazeera ran the tapes, a former US assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs was always brought in to comment; and so was a Muslim cleric, who made the point that Islam did not condone the killing of innocent people but also emphasized that, while Bin Laden condemned American bombings, he ordered the killing of innocent Americans. "To air the statements without any comments, without any opposing statements or viewpoints or analysis's [*sic*] then it's propaganda" (Schleifer & Sullivan, 2001). Fouda was contacted with the offer of a chance to interview Bin Laden. He said he considered all the professional ramifications of this offer and decided to go ahead with the story. Several Westerners – Peter Berg, Robert Fisk – had in the past interviewed Bid Laden, and Fouda contends that any of the networks would have leapt at the chance to interview him (Shihata, 2011).

Before the start of the Afghan bombing, Al Jazeera had been regarded by the West – and also by the US – as a role model for Arab democracy (Burman, 2011). Al Jazeera came in for heated criticism from the Bush administration for using the tapes, even though the administration was not open about the fact the network had shared the tapes with the US authorities well before it aired any part of the material. The Bush administration's response to Al Jazeera's challenging Afghan War coverage came as a shock to the Arab community and to others; the administration found itself "faced with 'a battle for hearts and minds' and the need to tell moderate Muslims it is not pursuing a 'war against Islam'" (Miladi, 2006, p. 957).

As a part of its public diplomacy campaign, as noted above, the administration began sending high-level officials to appear on the channel's interview shows, and Miladi (2006) reports that it even considered buying advertising time on Al Jazeera. In secret, however, the White House targeted the channel as a threat to all its strategic efforts in the Middle East and beyond, and in 2002 it hired a secret operative to coordinate a campaign against the organization and its journalists (Bamford, 2005). In 2003, when the US began bombing Baghdad, Al Jazeera had offices and staff ready to cover the offensive. Again, this stirred the ire of the Bush administration, which had warned all journalists that they should either agree to be embedded with coalition forces or get out of Iraq before the attack against Saddam Hussein's regime began. However, neither CNN nor Al Jazeera withdrew

completely, and Al Jazeera was careful to provide the US military with an exact description of its facilities in Baghdad (Fanning et al., 2007).

It was only from Al Jazeera that Western news organizations were able to get footage of what was happening in Baghdad as the bombs fell. The channel came under fire from the Bush administration for providing a video of Iraqi civilian casualties and of alliance casualties and prisoners. It is worth noting that, at the very time when American journalists and commentators were loudly criticizing Al Jazeera for its casualty and prisoner footage, they were using it – and also using their own images of dead Iraqi soldiers and displays of captured Iraqi prisoners. Al Jazeera Washington bureau chief Hafez al Mirazi suggested to Charlie Rose that, because Al Jazeera made a point of covering casualties and prisoners on both sides, it told a more balanced story of the war (Rose, 2003).

Initially the Bush administration's attacks against Al Jazeera appeared to be rhetorical. However, the more the US or alliance troops hit the network's offices in a war zone, the more questions were raised. The level of distrust increased exponentially after the April 1, 2003 attack, in which a US plane fired on Al Jazeera's bureau in Baghdad, killing reporter Tareq Ayyoub and seriously wounding others. The administration immediately declared that there had been firing and troops had been targeted by snipers in the vicinity of the bureau – an account contradicted by Al Jazeera staff (Fanning et al., 2007). A memo that leaked later reports that Bush suggested "taking military action" against Al Jazeera during a meeting with Tony Blair in April 2004.

A frequent critique of Al Jazeera has to do with objectivity. In a scene in the documentary *Control Room*, an unidentified American journalist questioned Joanne Tucker, the ALAZEERA.NET manager, about possible reactions to pictures of injured and dead American soldiers that the channel had used. Tucker said she understood that the Americans would be upset by the pictures; but she explained that it was "not a clean war, it was a very messy war," and perhaps exactly for this reason the American public needed to see pictures of what is really happening (Noujaim et al., 2004). The journalist argued that Al Jazeera reporters did take a position on the war, and she asked whether they "are even capable of being objective" (Noujaim et al., 2004). Tucker asked whether there were any US journalists who were not taking a position on the war. Having watched all the Western networks' coverage of the Iraq war, she suggested that objectivity was a "mirage" and turned the question back on the American: "Your journalists have a position on the war. Are they capable of being objective?" (Noujaim et al., 2004).

The journalist in *Control Room* missed the point, as Americans journalists and scholars do when they hold Al Jazeera to the same standard they as CNN or ABC. Al Jazeera understands the cultural context of its MENA audiences and presents news that "appeals to the Arab street that is not offered by western media outlets." Western media outlets "can also be painted with the same brush, as most corporations select and broadcast programs based on accepted perspectives in Western culture" (Carney, 2006, p. 7). An Al Jazeera correspondent put it succinctly: "To be objective in this area is not easy because we live here. We are part of the

people here. And this situation belongs to us also, and we have our opinions" (El-Nawawy & Iskander, 2002). If Al Jazeera reporters are sympathetic to the people they cover, this does not mean that AJE news is not professional, said the AJE general manager: "Sure Al Jazeera is sympathetic to the Palestinians but they do balance the story, they do let the Israelis give their side and that never happened before" (Fanning et al., 2007). Standard Western media coverage has tended to report Middle Eastern conflict through an Israeli lens. While content analysis suggested that both of the major Arab broadcasting channels tended to assign blame for aggression in the 2006 war in Lebanon to Israel, Al Jazeera was no more likely to do so than were news organizations in Germany (Kalb & Saivetz, 2007, p. 51).

Related to the issue of objectivity is the issue of language. For years, in journalism classrooms, teachers have used the maxim "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" to illustrate a point. However, this appears to be a lesson they all forget when they get on with their work, because Western scholars, journalists, and even comedians have critiqued AJE's use of words like "martyr," which would not be used on American news. On the other hand, the AJE staff suggests that it takes great care to avoid the linguistic or rhetorical stereotypes found in the news routinely circulated.

> In Algeria, for example, always the Algerian government is talking about any attack – it's by "Islamist group." We don't say so. We say by "armed groups," because we don't know exactly who have [*sic*] committed this attack. Is it an Islamist party or another party? There is a controversy there. (Brugmans et al., 2000)

Al Jazeera has been repeatedly criticized for beginning its independent journalism at the Qatari border and for overlooking issues of concern within the emirate (Brugmans et al., 2000; El-Nawawy & Iskander, 2002). Under the circumstances, Al Jazeera is being held to a double standard and criticized for adhering to a longstanding journalistic tradition. Under President Moi, more than 100 Western journalists lived in Nairobi and reported about the rest of Africa but overlooked Kenya, and thus they kept comfortable bureaus to return to (Rule, 1987). Reporters in Buenos Aires researched the Dirty War but waited until they were leaving the country to file their stories (Rosenblum, 1981). During the protests in Tahrir Square Western reporters based in bureaus in Cairo began reporting extensively about conditions of life under Mubarak, which they omitted to do before the protests started. None of this makes it right, but rather it is a reality of journalistic life in a complicated world.

More than a decade after most of the events that triggered their antipathy, the Americans remain caught up in their well-worn (and generally unfounded) myths about Al Jazeera – that it favors terrorism, is anti-Semitic or anti-American, or airs videos of beheadings of Western hostages (Al Jazeera, 2011). One of the continued criticisms of Al Jazeera is that it has Islamist leanings, a criticism perhaps fed by the fact that most of those who make it are exposed to Al Jazeera's English website and suspect that what they find there is different from what they would find in its

Arabic counterpart, if they could read it. A content analysis of the English and Arabic sites found local differences between the two sites, but no differences in how the stories were framed or treated, and it found "Al Qaeda agents portrayed more negatively than any other agent involved in the conflict" (Fahmy & Al Emad, 2011).

In 2006 a handful of conservative groups worked to prevent US cable companies from carrying Al Jazeera English (Austin, 2010). In 2011 the conservative Accuracy in Media resurrected lobbying efforts by suggesting that, if Americans were to have ready access to AJE, this "could incite people to kill Americans" (Kincaid, 2011; Wood, 2009). Still, seven US markets – New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Washington, DC; Burlington, VT; Chicago, IL; Bristol, RI; and Toledo, OH – now carry AJE. Toledo Buckeye Cable owner Allan Block said that the effort to dissuade him from carrying AJE made him take a second look, and he decided that his viewers had the right to the channel (Wood, 2009). CENTCOM officers whose job it was to liaise with Arab media suggested that the 2006 campaign designed to keep AJE off cable was "ludicrous" – a disservice to Americans, who were becoming insular and might gain from being exposed to news about the rest of the world: "I have no fear [of] any ideas brought through journalism to the United States" (Fanning et al., 2007).

While Al Jazeera brings in revenue from a mix of sources, including sales of footage, subscriptions, and advertising, pressure from the Gulf interests squelched early advertising after the channel's independent approach to news became clear (Miles, 2006, p. 172; Rinnawi, 2006, p. 87). While some critics push the point that the emir still underwrites the operation periodically, it is not clear what might have been gained from having Saudi or UAE advertisers bankrolling the network instead. Given its funding model, the former head of the CBC, who ran AJE at its start, compared Al Jazeera to a public broadcasting operation (Burman, 2011). The emir's support is no less transparent than media ownership in the Western countries where media and the scholars criticizing Al Jazeera operate and where a handful of owners – Disney, Berlusconi, Bertelsmann, or Murdoch – run the media (Bagdikian, 2004, pp. 27–54).

Disagreements arise over the extent to which the original Arabic channel alone represented a serious contra-flow to challenge the news flowing from the dominant Western media organizations. In one of the seminal works that pulled together the scholarship that was tackling the issue of contra-flow generally, Thussu suggested that Al Jazeera was a "subaltern," regional presence with limited contra-flow impact (Thussu, 2007, p. 24). Perhaps what one finds may have to do with how one defines presence. Thussu's focus on advertising, market presence, and content "glocalization" would not be an effective measure for Al Jazeera (pp. 18–20). A case less concerned with the emerging channel's business and more interested in its geopolitical impact on the world would have to take into account its distinctive images sent from the Palestinian territories, Baghdad, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Baghdad again. In addition to those images, from 2001 on Al Jazeera became a routine source of information for Western news organizations, covering stories

about war zones that they could not reach (Cassara & Lengel, 2004). Since Thussu wrote, AJE has spread across the globe, and during the 2011 Arab uprising it became the most regular and reliable source of information for audiences worldwide (Lynch, 2012). Thussu's suggestion that the public sphere that Al Jazeera pried open "had an Islamist agenda" because the channel had aired Bid Laden tapes would appear out of sync with the studies cited above (p. 24).

The emir's deep pockets have allowed AJE to claim the mission of reversing global media flows, an endeavor at which less viable organizations have proven unsuccessful. Research documents that AJE has more correspondents present on the ground in the global South than in the global North, airs more news from and about the global South than the global North, and covers that news via in-depth news formats (Figenschou, 2010, p. 98). The findings suggest AJE "represents the first potentially viable and competitive contra-flow of news," which revives interest in the news flow debate (p. 108). One of the grounds for the Four Freedoms award was the network's commitment "to offer a voice to a diversity of perspectives from under-reported regions" (Roosevelt Stichting, 2012).

Conclusion

There can be little question that Al Jazeera changed the world of news in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond. The original channel brought news, pictures, and a sense of public belonging to audiences from the hot hinterlands of Tunisia to the sands of the Gulf and the cold suburbs of London. The journalists of Al Jazeera invented a new kind of journalism and public affairs programming, borrowing from the models of Western journalism and then adapting them to the needs of their audience and their cultural surroundings. With lonely journalists in the war zones, the channel fed the rest of world the independent images and information about wars that would otherwise have been covered at one remove. With the arrival of AJE the rest of the world welcomed access to news that had more depth and focus and a different lens, though it took the Arab uprising for American audiences to recognize what they had been missing. AJE's numbers suggest that AJE is gaining on CNN, and, given its opening up to countries that until now have been covered only when they had "coups and earthquakes," AJE will change global news consumption in ways that can only be a challenge to the Western domination of the news and the public sphere.

Like the over-used "CNN effect," the "Al Jazeera effect" has come to encompass as many meanings as there are proponents. But Fouda suggests that perhaps the most important one is missing – Al Jazeera proved that "Arabs" could not only handle cameras and do journalism, but also "make a positive contribution" (Shihata, 2011). After his years of working with the BBC, when he was making the move to Al Jazeera, he says that very good friends – whom he nevertheless likes and trusts – actually expressed doubts that Arabs would be able to get a satellite news channel up and running. It is uncomfortable that this idea – that one might

like individual Arabs, but as a whole they might not quite be equal to "us" – was still professionally conceivable, even years after Said exposed the problems posed by the stance of Western journalists in his *Covering Islam* (Said, 1981). One has to wonder whether some of those perceptions may not persist.

An underlying theme can be found in many of the critiques of Al Jazeera explored in this chapter – critiques that confounded efforts simply to address the network's impact alone. For instance, American critics are stridently outspoken in their belief that Al Jazeera is anti-American. Those same critics appear to be unaware that, while research shows that most US TV news coverage of Islam is sharply negative – an overwhelming majority of the representatives of Islam presented to American TV audiences are violent extremists – only 7 percent of Muslims around the world believe that violence against civilians is ever justified (Esposito & Mogahed, 2008).

In Afghanistan and Iraq, Al Jazeera has come up against a traditional point of contention about the role of media as witness in war (Braestrup & Twentieth Century Fund, 1985), but what none of the US actors seems to remember is that they are expecting Al Jazeera to play by rules that were developed over years of difficult negotiation between the US military and the US press. Why would an external media actor be bound by the same rules, or expected to play along? Ironically, when an Al Jazeera reporter tried to – when he embedded with US troops – he was actually excluded from the pre-embed experience given the rest of the journalists.

Suspicion has fallen on members of Al Jazeera staff who covered the Taliban or Al Qaeda as a part of their professional work, even though Western journalists in the same position are never questioned (Shihata, 2011). In 2005, Teyssir Allouni – a Syrian-born, naturalized Spaniard – was found guilty by a Spanish court of collaborating with al Qaeda. Allouni insisted on his innocence throughout; and in 2012 a European Court of Human Rights overturned his sentence, calling the trial unfair and illegal (Chatriwala, 2012).

US media are often quick to criticize Al Jazeera's coverage of civilian stories, whether from the Intifada, Afghanistan, Iraq, or Gaza, contending that the network is too sensationalist and inclined to render images of human suffering. Such response is "hypocritical," because images of bodies show up on US network news when this suits the narrative (Austin, 2010). It is usually in times of crisis that Arab coverage is contrasted with European or American media – and misinterpreted, because it is being viewed through a Western lens (Mellor, 2007, p. 118).

Al Jazeera does not need apologists, even network managers admit that errors are made in the fast-paced world of 24-hour news coverage; and the channel has procedures and committees in place for considering serious news-based complaints (Ghosh, 2011). What would benefit everyone would be a suspension of too ready criticism for the opportunity to gain exposure to the serious work the station has done and to the serious news AJE is engaged in. Media critics and practitioners asking Al Jazeera to be more self-critical should follow their own advice.

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24

Nonviolence as a Communication Strategy
An Introduction to the Rhetoric of Peacebuilding

Ellen W. Gorsevski

Internationally, new civil wars are unfolding in nation-states such as Iraq and Syria. Meanwhile longstanding civil strife, which has collectively caused the death of millions of people, continues unabated in nations like Burma, India, Pakistan, Guatemala, Columbia, Somalia, and Sudan –to name just a few. From my vantage point in the USA, there is bitterly acrimonious political debate at the country's epicenter in Washington, DC. As Nobel Peace laureate Lehmah Gbowee reminds us, there is rampant violence against women and children in societies from Liberia to the US (Gbowee & Mithers, 2011). For school children, abuse is often meted out by the ubiquitous school bully who beats up victims, or who may have even caused the suicide of that sensitive teenager who bore the brunt of the bully's malice, all while parents and school administrators were oblivious to the situation. Clearly, from the daily news, the world looks like an overwhelmingly violent place. It is easy to get discouraged and feel helpless about making any inroads toward a better world when one hears about such continual and seemingly intractable conflicts. Yet, as Johan Galtung (2004) and Elise Boulding (2000) have pointed out, there is a lot more going on in the world than what we hear about in most mainstream news. There is an exciting world of nonviolence and peacebuilding out there for you to discover, if you choose to take the time to learn more about it.

But what is nonviolence? What is peacebuilding? How is nonviolence used as a communication strategy, and why is it an important form of communication to understand? This chapter will explain these terms, situate the study of nonviolent rhetoric and other forms of peacebuilding communication within the field of communication, briefly survey the extant literature on nonviolent forms of communication, and identify some key challenges that appear as obstructions to better understanding and use of nonviolent strategies of communication.

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The discussion will close with recommendations for future research on this important area of study and practice.

Defining Nonviolence and Peacebuilding

Nonviolence generally refers to respecting one's adversary while using means other than violence to address conflicts. Nonviolence tends to invoke the social justice practices and agitation of historical activists like Henry David Thoreau, who protested both the Americans' invasion of Mexico (1846–1847) and slavery in the United States – a problem raised in the aftermath of that war – by not paying his taxes and by urging others to do the same (Calabrese, 2004). Other important Americans, such as Dorothy Day and Nobel Peace laureates Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, also advocated nonviolent social activism, especially using strategic forms of communication such as networking among social and diplomatic elites, creating street publications for working class citizens and immigrants, writing letters, newspaper articles, essays and books, and giving speeches, all designed to promote peace and to argue vociferously against war (Fischer, 2006). Nonviolence also entails arguing on behalf of those who are treated unfairly, so that they may gain rights and attain a greater level of social and economic equality.

Nonviolence is a method of practice and a field of study generally relating to peace-oriented and nonmilitary means to effect social change and to promote justice. Nonviolent theory is based on the premise that peace without justice is not really peace at all. Peace without justice and equality is called *negative peace*. Conversely, peace under conditions of justice is referred to as *positive peace*. Nonviolent theory seeks to offset violence by addressing the root causes of humans oppressing one another and harming other living beings and ecosystems on the planet in that process. By gaining a deeper understanding of the causes of violence, one may develop civil and peace-oriented ways to curtail it. Galtung (2004) identified three basic types of violence, which are interrelated. The first is *direct violence*, as in a person punching another person or, on a larger scale, two armies fighting each other on the battlefield. Direct violence is easiest to see and understand. But Galtung argues that the two other types ultimately cause just as much harm – if not greater.

The second type of violence is *structural*. Structural violence – sometimes called "institutional" – consists in the harms that are embedded in the habits, practices, and norms of institutions such as schools, zoning regulations, or policies and laws made by organizations and governments. The third type of violence is *cultural*, and it encompasses commonly accepted attitudes, beliefs, habits, and norms of a given society that exert harm in a variety of ways, for instance by perpetuating social and economic inequality, by causing environmental degradation, or by threatening the well-being of living creatures in natural and urban ecosystems. Because societies produce people who accept a particular way of existence, structural and cultural forms of violence usually are the most difficult ones for us to see.

For example, there is currently a crisis in Canberra, the capital city of Australia: Australia's national mascot, the kangaroo, is being killed by increasing suburban sprawl and its associated automobile traffic. While Canberrans know and have it inscribed in their belief system that kangaroos are an important symbol of national identity, most dwellers of that city go about their daily lives turning a blind eye to violent "culls" in which raiders go out under the cover of darkness and shoot hundreds of kangaroos, and then also kill their young by crushing their small skulls. This would be an example of all three kinds of violence: cultural (we love our kangaroos and only kill them in secret), structural (gross human expansion of suburban areas and automobile traffic), and direct (purposeful: shooting and crushing skulls of kangaroos; accidental: hitting kangaroos with cars). This environmental example shows how widely accepted human practices and cultural habits – like relying on individual cars instead of mass transit – together with the act of ignoring less accepted ones – like the inhumane government practice of ruthless culling – contribute to violence. Americans may not be aware of it, but similar cullings occur in the US around the wild Western bronco, which is perhaps the country's second greatest symbol after the eagle. There are horse cullings, too, matched by cullings of American bison – so that Americans can have massive numbers of cattle grazing to support the cultural habit of eating hamburgers. And, because such forms of cultural, structural, and direct violence are out of sight, most average Americans are blissfully unaware of these facts. This lack of awareness and the resulting silence about such issues are a form of communicative violence that is addressed nonviolently, in communication, by those who seek to create a more fair and humane society.

In modern industrial societies, problems such as homelessness, crime, drug abuse, or obesity are often blamed solely on the individual – the victim or the perpetrator – and his or her alleged failings or shortcomings, without attention being paid to the *complex structural and cultural influences* that contributed to a person becoming homeless or believing that the only available economic option is to commit robbery, to take and sell drugs, or to live a sedentary life while consuming large amounts of non-nutritious foods. Structural and cultural forms of violence tend to be incredibly complicated and difficult to resolve. It is easier to point to a person and say "you're fat and lazy" than it is to ascertain the culpability of countless corporations that conditioned that person, from childhood to adulthood, to overconsume products, through a communication process called "branding" (a form of propaganda). It is easier to call a person mean names than to assess the zoning laws that put junk food outlets in neighborhoods while shutting down grocery stores that sell nutritious foods. In terms of cultural violence, Americans have gotten used to the high-stress lifestyle that prevents many people from taking the time to buy, prepare, and serve fresh foods. Indeed a lot of urban centers are now called "food deserts" because of the overabundance of fast food retailers and the utter absence of stores that offer healthy foods. Food deserts are caused by *structural and cultural forces* that are very difficult to pinpoint; it is much easier simply to look at persons of size on the street and to assume that their abundant body size is entirely their fault.

Speaking of diet in the context of how modern industrial society blocks one's ability to exercise, I work on a college campus that does not even provide sidewalks in many areas, much less bicycle lanes for students and university staff to get around town or campus safely on foot or by bike. The lack of such spaces raises structural constraints to one's ability and incentive to exercise. These constraints are supported by cultural norms that value the automobile as the only or the best means of transportation for getting around town, or even around campus. Thus students and university staffers who might wish to watch their weight and to exercise to maintain a healthy waistline are at a disadvantage. Economic constraints limit them still further, because, in order to exercise at the campus recreation center, one must pay an exorbitant membership fee, which is too high for many to afford.

Similarly, soldiers who are just returning to the US from war zones like Afghanistan often experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is grossly underdiagnosed and often goes untreated, with devastating effects. Soldiers with PTSD have killed their spouses or have committed suicide in startlingly high numbers. In 2010 and 2011 the number of returning soldiers who committed suicide surpassed the number of soldiers killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, taken together (Project Censored, 2012). Thus, while the *direct violence* to the self (which is implicit in suicide) is already underreported by the news media, the *structurally and culturally violent* influence of the lack of a social and economic safety net for returning veterans is left unexamined (Project Censored, 2012). This influence is even more difficult to observe, and yet it contributed to all these deaths by suicide. The societal silence over these issues constitutes a form of communicative failure and discursive violence.

Each of the three types of violence presented above needs first of all to be understood in order for nonviolence, as a justice-oriented view of the world, to be able to be integrated into each person's awareness of the world around. Once we understand that various forms of communication undergird violence, nonviolent means to counter that violence may be learned and practiced. Galtung (2004) presents direct, structural, and cultural violence as a triangle in which each kind of violence contributes to the other. So take, for example, the hypothetical scenario of an unfair male teacher. Let's say that this male teacher behaves unfairly to one type of student but is more partial to another type of student. His preferences might be based on attributes such as physical and social characteristics – say, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth. Expanding the hypothesis, let's assume that a male high school biology teacher assigns grades more punitively to all of his blond female students and regularly criticizes and humiliates them in front of the class. The "bad teacher" scenario exemplifies structural and cultural forms of violence – and possibly even direct violence, too. For instance, this unfair teacher may have tenure, which means that it is difficult, if not impossible, to cease his teaching duties. Cases like this, when they occur in real life, indicate that some aspects of tenure may be part of a larger structurally violent system of education (Sarrio, 2011). Also, when the Western culture at large and

US culture in particular emphasize the "dumb blonde" female stereotype through cultural means such as prevalent sexist jokes, movies, and TV shows as forms of mediated communication, this teacher's behavior might even be seen as culturally or socially acceptable and "normal." From a nonviolent perspective, the teacher's behavior may appear routine – especially considering that, within this culture, his behavior is "logical" in some way. The teacher's behavior makes sense, namely, as a part of a larger cultural beliefs system that passively accepts violence against women (Olson, 2004). The direct violence of the situation is manifested in the fact that blonde female students – even honor's students – feel physically ill before going to class, because they anticipate being humiliated, while brunette female students or male students of any hair color experience the problem of being bystanders to the abuse, either tacitly accepting it or speaking up about it and then being targeted as a result. Communication scholars call this type of situation a negative "classroom climate" (Center for Teaching and Learning, 2011). The blonde female students in the class might develop depression, eczema, stomach ulcers, insomnia, or other physical ailments that typically occur when people are experiencing stress caused by verbal assaults (Musick, 2011). So, while the teacher might not actually physically beat up any of the targeted students in the class, it is clear that physical harm in the form of nervous system ailments often occur to the victims of verbal assault as a result of the teacher's cruel behavior towards them, even if it is merely talk. Hence nonverbal, spoken, and written forms of communication can, *all of them*, be violent, nonviolent, or somewhere in between these two poles, along a continuum.

Peacebuilding refers to actions that are taken to specifically address the underlying inequities, often structural or cultural, that are built into systems and contribute to the three forms of violence. Morris (2000) defines peacebuilding this way:

> Peacebuilding involves a full range of approaches, processes, and stages needed for transformation toward more sustainable, peaceful [social and interpersonal] relationships and governance modes and structures. Peacebuilding includes building legal and human rights institutions as well as fair and effective governance and dispute resolution processes and systems. To be effective, peacebuilding activities require careful and participatory planning, coordination among various efforts, and sustained commitments by [stakeholders to the conflict].

Communication is integral to all the kinds and levels of peacebuilding efforts. Strategies of nonviolent communication are central to the success of participants to a conflict addressing the underlying causes of the conflict in ways that are healthy and promote continued interaction in the future, harm reduction, and mutual trust.

In the context of communicating about conflicts, nonviolence generally refers to interlocutors valuing their relationships with one another even when there are angry debates over how a conflict should be addressed. For instance, when Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa following the long harsh years

of bloodshed and suffering of black South Africans, many South Africans – both whites and blacks – opposed Mandela's desire for peace and his use of conciliatory language toward those white bureaucrats who had perpetrated unspeakable crimes against humanity, including tortures and murders. To this day, South Africa's truth and reconciliation process, instituted by Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, remains controversial because Tutu called for victims and perpetrators of such horrors to sit with each other in one room and address the past as a means to move forward, with a realistic understanding and public acknowledgment of what people had suffered. At its core, the truth and reconciliation process was based on nonviolent communication strategies and principles, which in and of themselves are controversial for reasons that will be explained later in this chapter. However, before getting into the details and debate over the utility and ethics of nonviolent communication strategies, the next section will summarize the background of the study and practice of such techniques and the linkage between their study and practice and their place in the field of communication as a whole.

Background of Nonviolence and Peacebuilding Within the Field of Communication

Today the field of communication is roughly divided in half between social scientific and humanistic methods of research and inquiry. The social scientific or quantitative–empirical research that is done in communication is often heavily based on survey research. Researchers might, for example, survey college students' attitudes toward things such as how students communicate about race or sexuality with their friends, family, or with strangers. When the data have been collected and the information from these kinds of survey has been entered and processed, scholars produce research articles based on these findings, with the help of statistical analysis software packages that quantify the results – that is, their college students' or other researchers' perceptions of various issues in communication. Social scientific research tends to include areas such as relational or interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, and organizational communication. Quantitative studies of this sort form a growing and well-funded area of communication research.

As for the other half of communication research, the humanistic or qualitative half, it tends to encompass areas of inquiry that are less quantifiable and may be based on items like principles, ideology, or other, rather philosophical aspects of the human condition. Qualitative research features methods are decidedly non-numeric. Qualitative research might go for instance into studies of autoethnography – a field of personal reflections where scholars such as Olson (2004) reflect on personal experiences through the prism of research informing, say, the experience of violence in intimate or romantic relationships. Qualitative research may extend to the study of rhetorical artifacts that constitutes rhetorical criticism. Such humanistic

research tends to be published in journals like the *Journal of Critical/Cultural Studies* or the old standby of rhetorical inquiry, the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, which in its focus on oratory has retained the quaint, "old-speech" tone left over from the early twentieth century.

Of course, while most researchers tend to fall into one methodological camp or the other, there are among us those who can do both kinds of research. For instance, areas like intercultural communication are sometimes studied via both methods, that is, through a mixture of social scientific/quantitative and humanistic/qualitative approaches. These mixtures are referred to as mixed methods, blended methods, or multimethods. Interestingly, the study of nonviolent communication and of peacebuilding communication is an area that is equally of interest to scholars at both methodological ends of the field of communication.

In terms of qualitative research, nonviolence as a communication strategy has been studied by rhetorical scholars, especially in the context of the American civil rights movement. Rhetorical scholars like Miller (2007), Vail (2006), and Leff and Utley (2004) have produced an extensive body of research about nonviolent public orators and activists, for instance about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Research by Groscurth (2006) has also contributed Buddhist notions of emptiness and interdependence to emphasize, from a non-Western perspective, how nonviolent communication strategies can apply to communicating about race relations. Other rhetorical scholars like Terrill (2007) have studied cases where provocative orators and writers who are often perceived as advocating violence, for instance Malcolm X, actually used their communication abilities nonviolently, to advance civil rights. Malcolm X did not take up arms and start a militia himself; he was an intellectual, a writer, and an itinerant public speaker; words, not guns, were his tools of trade. Even controversial figures such as Muhammad Ali might be considered to exemplify the use of both violent and nonviolent forms of communication in support of the nonviolent campaign for civil rights (Gorsevski & Butterworth, 2011). Still other scholars, in the areas of organizational and business communication (Dhir, 2006) and religious communication (Zompetti, 2006), have been interested in publishing research on nonviolent forms of communication.

For their part, scholars of interpersonal and relational communication have also produced extensive research on what makes for healthy communicative practices in the family, in a friendship, in intimate partner relationships, and in workplace or community-based relationships (Cupach, Canary, & Spitzberg, 2010). Conversely, researchers who use social scientific methods have also studied unhealthy and counterproductive communication practices, including violent forms of communication within abusive marital relationships and couplings between romantic partners (Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990). Also, especially in the wake of the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011 to 2012, various forms of cyber-communication – such as social media networks that are being used for nonviolent protests about social, political, and economic injustice – have been increasingly researched and discussed (Fitri, 2011).

Thus far, key terms such as nonviolence and peacebuilding have been defined to give you a better sense of what nonviolent communication is. This part of the discussion has just provided the context for the kinds of research that the field of communication covers; specifically, it shows how studies of nonviolent communication are part of the wider field. A basic introduction to nonviolent communication strategies will be offered next. However, as there is insufficient space to cover all the possible strategies in one chapter, the reader should bear in mind that what follows is only an overview. There is much more to be explored and learned about nonviolent communication.

Nonviolent Communication Strategies for Peacebuilding

Nonviolent communication can be defined as a spoken, written, or nonverbal means of conveying and receiving information, for instance by sight or touch, with the goal of developing and sustaining healthy and productive relationships. The interpersonal or inter-community relationships where nonviolent communication operates exist at various levels, from the intimate level of romantic partners, through the interpersonal level of friends, co-workers, or neighbors, to the international level of representatives of nations and groups of identifiable people (sometimes such groups are officially stateless). Nonviolent communication often relates to, or invokes, an awareness of identity and cultural markers such as ethnicity, race, religion, linguistic and national affiliations, and sexual orientation. Conflicts between persons or groups of persons often hinge on mutual misperceptions about one or more of these identity variables.

At the international level, diplomacy is a strategy of nonviolent communication that is designed to keep nation-states and groups of people – namely people who may neither be officially recognized residents of the state they live in nor reside in an officially recognized state – in dialogue over contentious issues. An example of such a group is that of Tibetans, an ethnic minority living in the geographic place called Tibet, which is a disputed region inside China. Dialogue is the preferable nonviolent alternative to the parties shooting missiles at each other. An example of an international conflict over stateless persons is that of Palestinians, who live in great numbers among the population of Jordan. Palestinians generally identify religiously with Islam, yet symbolically they may be more associated with the state of Israel and with a desired future nation-state of Palestine, despite a longstanding conflict with Christians and Jews. International diplomacy that conveys nonviolent communication between peoples and states in conflict has been closely associated with diplomats like former US President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Ironically, each of these men displayed deep religious beliefs in his own faith, so, while religion was a key factor in the conflict, their faith may have contributed to their ability, as leaders, to enact a forbearing and nonviolent form of respect for one another, even as adversaries. Contrary to the dogma offered by xenophobic and "war on terror" propaganda,

many world religions espouse nonviolence. These leaders' contributions to peacebuilding included their active participation and engagement in historic peace talks; each brought a great sense of personal investment of time and energy, which created measurable, if tenuous, progress in the ever evolving Middle East peace process (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991).

At the level of community, strategies for nonviolent communication may vary from maintaining politeness and civility at meetings (Huerth, 2008) to using one's sense of humor selectively and judiciously, in a way that unites people across conflict, and refraining from harsh sarcasm. Humor helps defuse tension and creates a more positive environment at meetings, supporting the goodwill and patience that are necessary when dealing with fraught issues in conflict situations. Forester (2009) suggests that using humor that is "respectful … [does] not make fun of others, [nor] dismiss[es] their concerns" is a productive nonviolent communication strategy, which promotes creativity and fosters a productive interpersonal climate designed to promote peacebuilding processes (p. 157). Further, Forester claims that a careful, mindful use of humor unites all the parties to a conflict in a sense of the "absurdity" of the situation, which helps disparate parties "to see that we … share concerns" and that "we are all vulnerable" (p. 158). Humor also enables people to "connect, to feel safe, and to reduce symbolic power inequities" between them (p. 164).

Communication scholars have also discussed the ways in which noted civil rights activists such as Ella Baker (DeLaure, 2008), Robert Parrish Moses (Jensen & Hammerback, 2000), and Fannie Lou Hamer (Brooks, 2011) used nonviolent communication strategies in their tireless and grueling efforts at community organizing, in order to promote voting rights and other suppressed rights for African Americans. DeLaure (2008) highlighted the fact that Baker was the "unsung heroine" of the civil rights movement because, instead of seeking the spotlight, she let others gain skills in decision making (p. 3). DeLaure is of the view that Baker's potent communication skills have been largely forgotten, having been overshadowed by more public male figures like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Baker's strategies of nonviolent communication featured "listening, inviting, and fostering reciprocal engagement" in discussion and debate (p. 3). Notably, Baker was a role model for Robert Parrish Moses.

Hammerback and Jensen (2000) found that Robert Parrish Moses used nonviolent communication strategies such as avoiding flamboyant oratory, not arguing with others so as to convey "I'm right, you're wrong," but rather working quietly behind the scenes to mentor and instill leadership skills to young people. Cavin (2006) notes that famous peacebuilding scholar Elise Boulding also used this kind of nonviolent communication strategy as a door opener to peace-fostering conversation and dialogue. Also, Jensen and Hammerback (2000) discovered that Moses sought out influential individuals in communities and used his "powerfully persuasive" interpersonal skills to convince them to support his civil rights mission (p. 6). Moses also used nonverbal forms of nonviolent communication by not physically retaliating even when he was beaten up, as he

often was, by white segregationists: Moses was incredibly courageous (Jensen & Hammerback, 2000). Paradoxically, celebrities like Muhammad Ali used *symbolic* forms of spoken and visual violence as a strategy of nonviolent communication aiming to press for nonviolent social change (Gorsevski & Butterworth, 2011). Thus nonviolent communication strategies often require each of us to stand up bravely to injustice – to say or do something when someone is being bullied rather than standing by doing nothing, so as to protect our own skins.

At an interpersonal level, nonviolent communication may cross both verbal and tactile forms of sharing information. For instance, if two persons engaged in a romantic partnership have been arguing and one of the partners, while still upset about having had to stay home with their child while the other went to a bar with friends, reaches over to pat the hand of the now returned partner, that would be a nonverbal gesture of conciliation: in short, it would be nonviolent communication of the tactile, physical, unspoken variety. If the partner then replies with utmost sincerity, "I'm so sorry, I really should have gotten us a baby-sitter as I had promised, so we could have both gone out with our friends tonight," then that would be a verbal or spoken example of nonviolent communication.

Nonviolent strategies of interpersonal and relational communication generally are studied by quantitative researchers. Basic strategies for using nonviolent forms of communication in interpersonal relationships are covered in most undergraduate communication classes that have course titles such as Communication and Conflict or Conflict Management. Popular books like Fisher, Ury, and Patton's (1991) *Getting to Yes* or Ury's (2007) *The Power of a Positive No* provide simple and easy to follow negotiation techniques, which help us find constructive ways to deal with others in our everyday lives. With few exceptions, most of the means they suggest for negotiating and addressing conflicts tend to be considerate and civil, and most of their recommendations constitute practical, nonviolent communication strategies.

Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991) suggest separating people and emotions from the underlying causes of conflicts. This procedure enables the parties to focus on their *interests*, which often means their desires or needs. Seeking shared interests helps parties to come up with creative options that could benefit all concerned. The drawback of this approach is that, as in the example of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, sometimes longstanding historical, material, and power-based inequities – as well as structural and cultural forms of violence – creep into negotiations in unanticipated ways, short-shrifting the less empowered persons or groups. In addition to studying some of the cultural, gendered, or structural strategies for addressing conflicts nonviolently, Wilmot and Hocker (2007) also devote extensive discussion to ascertaining how to manage issues stemming from different parties in a conflict that hold different levels and forms of power. The conundrum of whether or not to use nonviolent forms of communication to address power inequities, or how best to do it, is too complex an issue to be dealt with fully here; that will have to remain a subject for another occasion. The present discussion only introduces some of the basic concepts of nonviolent communication strategies.

Sometimes bitter conflicts call for *third-party mediators* to step in and assist people or groups to communicate with one another in healthier, more productive ways. Thus another productive nonviolent communication strategy can be to seek out an objective person or a formal adjudicating body not involved in the dispute, wise, experienced, and patient, and to ask that person or organization to listen to both sides' views. The third-party mediator can help the disputing parties to communicate with each other in civil ways. For example, Ury (2007) recalls an electric moment he had at the United Nations when he was asked to help mediate Venezuela's political future after decades of civil strife. In an auditorium packed with angry members of opposing political groups, Ury felt the two sides were about to break out into fist-fighting and mayhem. He defused the situation by asking them to identify with one simple *shared interest*, which they did: the shared interest was that both sides had had enough of the fighting. Ury then asked the auditorium of people to say out loud, "*Basta!*" (which means "Enough!" in Spanish; pp. 47–48). Ury reported that, by the third repetition of "*Basta!*" as a unified roar that "shook to its rafters" the giant auditorium, the climate in the room had changed completely: everyone present was ready to begin peacebuilding discussions in earnest and, above all, nonviolently (p. 48).

Researchers in rhetorical theory and criticism as well as in cultural studies continue to steadily learn more and publish books and articles about the rich history of nonviolent communication (Gorsevski, 2004). Mohandas K. Gandhi (known as "Mahatma," Great Soul), famously fought British imperial colonization using nonviolent communication strategies such as leading marches and going to prison for violating laws he saw as unjust, writing newspaper articles, and giving speeches. Gandhi's nonviolent communication was aimed to promote mutually peaceful and equitable conditions (Bode, 2000). A serious student of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. went to India to study Gandhi's techniques. King then returned to the US and, along with Hamer, Baker, Moses, and countless others, applied specific nonviolent communication strategies to further the civil rights movement in the US starting in the 1950s.

Since then, the use of nonviolent communication has become broadly practiced in a vast array of the possible human contexts where conflicts crop up and in which people wish to grapple in nonviolent ways with one another's differences. Over time, studies into nonviolent communication have benefitted immensely from insights gained through interdisciplinary knowledge from other fields, such as peace and conflict studies, or legal studies in restorative justice and mediation and arbitration. More recently, respected communication scholars such as Collier and Broome (2010, 2011) have created workshops and discussion panels at annual National Communication Association Conferences to address nonviolent communication, which, like many areas in the field, has morphed into being called "peacebuilding communication." Given all of these advances both in research and in practice, why don't we hear more about nonviolent strategies of communication and other forms of peacebuilding? The next section of this discussion, then, turns to addressing a few of the challenges that scholars and practitioners face in getting

the word out about the benefits of learning more about, and practicing, strategies of nonviolent communication that assist in peacebuilding.

Nonviolence and Peacebuilding as Emerging Concepts in Communication

As Gorsevski (2004) has explained, aside from the study of US civil rights rhetoric, such as analyses of the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the field of communication has produced comparatively few studies on nonviolent strategies of communication when these strategies are identified in rhetorical terms. The frustrating reality in scholarship and pedagogy in the field of peace and conflict/justice studies and of communication studies – and this observation extends to textbooks available for course materials – is that the lion's share of the literature emphasizes outmoded, adversarial modes of communication and theory (Gorsevski, 2004), such as the famous "prisoner's dilemma," extolled and discussed both in security studies or peace and conflict studies (Barash & Webel, 2002) and, commonly, in texts for courses in communication and conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). Similarly, the study of war oratory has long dominated the field of communication generally and the practice of rhetorical criticism specifically, rather than featuring a more inclusive, humanistic approach that highlights, for instance, human tendencies and abilities to contribute in a collaborative, non-competitive way to social justice activism and peacebuilding initiatives (Gorsevski, 2004).

The twentieth-century concept of *nonviolence* is gradually being used interchangeably with the twenty-first-century term *peacebuilding* in the literature on peace communication and peace and justice studies. Perhaps in part because the concept of "nonviolence" has increasingly been confused in the literature with criminal justice concepts, such as that of "nonviolent offenders," the situation can create confusion for students and researchers who are interested in using nonviolent strategies of communication as a healthy and productive form of conflict management. When studying rhetorical artifacts such as the works of pre- to mid-twentieth-century social justice leaders like Rosa Parks, generally the term "nonviolence" refers to the use of civil disobedience from or nonparticipation in systems that are deemed unjust. Rosa Parks is often inaccurately portrayed as a "passive" person who simply remained seated on a segregated bus rather than standing up, as legally required under segregation, to give her seat to a white passenger. Sometimes the fact that Parks was arrested (which, in those days, meant you might have been beaten to death by police) is lost in narratives about the incident. Parks, like Moses, was incredibly brave. And, as McGuire (2010) points out, there is so much more to Parks than this single moment of courage. Parks was actually a long-time activist member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); she fought for many years on behalf of African American women who had been raped by white men and helped victims of rape seek legal redress for their suffering, even though at the time achieving

such justice was rare (McGuire, 2010). Parks was raised by parents who subscribed to Marcus Garvey's then radical views, which preceded the "Black is beautiful" slogans of the late 1960s and conferred ethnic and racial pride to her sense of humanity and identity. As McGuire emphasizes, Parks was no mere seamstress or "passive" bus sitter: rather she was a persistent and experienced human rights activist. Parks had campaigned against segregration and its legal system, which enabled white perpetrators of crime to roam free while innocent African American citizens were being raped and lynched (McGuire, 2010).

Perhaps the most powerful nonviolent communication strategy of all, for Parks, was being empowered, knowing the laws and her legal rights better than anyone, and having an apt judgment as to when and how to optimally exercise an act of civil disobedience that would symbolically expose the horrific injustice of the entire American segregationist legal system. As Dimock, Eckstein, and Dimock (2010) assert, "civil disobedience is a mode of argument" (p. 87). These authors define civil disobedience as a strategy of nonviolent communication that includes the following features: "(1) It is a public and purposeful act; (2) it is a conscientiously performed violation of … [an unjust] law, which (3) seeks to reshape the public discourse on an issue" (p. 87). Thus nonviolent communication strategies like civil disobedience include exercising our personal responsibility for being aware of the ways in which society exerts *cultural*, *structural*, and *direct* forms of violence, so that we may then articulately convey, in words and actions, our disagreement with these forms. By interpersonally or publicly registering their disagreement, people with whom we come into contact may be reminded or become better aware of the phenomenon of violence. Once violence that was formerly invisible (*cultural* and *structural*) is made to be visible (*direct*) through civil disobedience, it is far more difficult for members of a society to ignore or repress it: a space is opened up for dialogue and debate that centers on the causes of injustice and on creating awareness that the means to promote justice are within everyone's grasp.

A central nonviolent communication strategy of Mahatma Gandhi consisted in asking people to search their consciences and to defy unjust laws (a case in point was an unfair salt tax in British colonial India). Tens of thousands of people like Parks and Moses defied humiliating segregation laws in the Jim Crow South of the US in the 1950s and 1960s, a process of making public and visible the cultural and structural forms of violence in place there. The 1960s and 1970s brought more public marches, protests, and civil disobedience designed to put an end to the Vietnam War – and also to promote Indian/Native American rights, Latino/a rights, and women's rights manifested in abortion rights and equitable wages for work. The 1980s saw the Berrigan brothers' and the Women's Peace Camp's nonviolent uses of civil disobedience to reveal the insanity and the mutually assured destruction (which had the appropriate acronym MAD) of all-out nuclear warfare. Laware (2004) documented the nearly 20 years of active nonviolent presence and protest of women antinuclear activists in Newbury, England, the site of an airforce base equipped with nuclear missiles. Laware discovered the peace women used an "embodied rhetoric" to nonviolently "challenge the real and symbolic … markers

that the base represented" (Laware, 2004, p. 19). Through the depth and breadth of their presence, these women helped to undermine the public's support for the ready use of nuclear weapons that would kill millions of people instantaneously and would leave many thousands more to die of radiation sickness. Laware (2004) argues that these women's persistent presence seriously, albeit slowly, impacted public perceptions and the terms of the debate on the ready utility of nuclear weapons. Thus sometimes being physically present as a witness and as a reminder of cultural, structural, or direct forms of violence can serve as a nonverbal strategy and as an embodied means of nonviolent communication.

By 1999, the protests at the World Trade Organization (WTO) conference in Seattle, Washington featured nonviolent civil disobedience from thousands of union workers, teachers, students, and blue- and white-collar workers alike: each of these groups fought for its own interests, but these were in the last resort shared interests. For instance, one group of animal rights activists objected to the WTO's cancellation of earlier legislation that had protected endangered sea turtles: the cancelled legislation forbade using on sea turtles the nets used for catching shrimp, in which the turtles usually get tangled and injured and then die. As Bruner (2005) describes it, the leader of the turtles group, Ben White of the Animal Welfare Institute, explained to his activist followers the tenets of nonviolent communication that would need to be adhered to during the street protests: activists ought to behave like turtles, as "patient, placid, gentle," and "as ancient repositories of wisdom that should not fight back" if provoked (p. 147). White also asked the turtle activists not to use "hostile language" (p. 147). Bruner's characterization of White's directives indicates an awareness that nonviolent means support nonviolent ends.

Nonviolent public protests are still occurring. In late 2011 nonviolent activism was newsworthy, as students at the University of California-Davis were participating in a nonviolent, peaceful sit-in on campus as part of the Occupy Wall Street movement. During the sit-in, a campus police officer approached, and then he pepper-sprayed the students, who were seated cross-legged on the ground in a row; he sprayed the students directly into their faces, twice. The incident was captured on video, which went "viral," creating public disgust over the cop's excessively violent behavior. Symbolically, the nonviolent nonverbal communication of the students, who received the caustic spray without fighting back, made those in power look bad – especially the cop and the university officials, who were slow to apologize for it. Calabrese (2004) pegs nonviolent communication, especially in its nonverbal form of civil disobedience, as a "public expression of the politics of shame. To shine light on injustice usually means exposing and embarrassing those who perpetuate it … acts of civil disobedience are often correctly understood [by audiences] to be acts of courage" (p. 326). Thus, at times when there are observers to witness and report on nonviolent forms of communication, nonviolent strategies can prove to be successful in stimulating public and official dialogue about contentious issues.

Bode (2000) maintains that Gandhi's actions, speeches, and writings constitute a nonviolent rhetorical theory that emphasizes a "concern for the maintenance of

human relationships and the enrichment of personhood" while also evincing "openness and flexibility" (p. 33). In Bode's assessment of Gandhi's "rhetorical theory," Gandhi's rhetoric shares substance with Foss and Griffin's (1995) invitational rhetoric, which values communicative exchanges featuring "equality, immanent value, and self determination" (p. 4). Communication scholars have disagreed about the utility of nonviolent forms of communication like invitational rhetoric for addressing issues of violence and injustice. Swartz (2005) and Lozano-Reich and Cloud (2009) argued that invitational rhetoric is not useful in situations where power differences create unequal and unfair advantages to one party over another, as happens in many typical conflicts. However, Stroud (2005) cites Dr. King's nonviolent rhetoric in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" as an exemplar of invitational rhetoric that promotes justice despite the challenges that King and other civil rights activists faced as underdogs in their campaign for equality, voting rights, and the goal of ending racial discrimination and segregation in the US.

Bode (2000) found that Gandhi's view of the use of rhetoric in human communication, to debate over conflict or change, acknowledged that rhetoric could be violent or nonviolent. While acknowledging that in some extreme or rare cases violence in speech or act could be admitted, Gandhi preferred nonviolent speech and actions, especially since he saw violence as a lazy tendency, one that was to be avoided through willpower. Bode (2000) discovered that, for Gandhi, "nonviolence is both the [ideal] means of communication and the … [goal] of communication" (p. 34). In other words, if parties to a conflict engage in debate, the forms of communication they use influence the outcome of the conflict. If parties use violent communication, then an ugly result should be expected. But, if parties engage with one another by using nonviolent communication, then, on Gandhi's reckoning, the odds should favor a result that promotes peace and justice.

Bode (2000) further subdivides Gandhi's nonviolent system by noting that Gandhi saw communicators as "active rather than passive" agents in the conflict; agents who "share power" and are responsible for "focusing on relationships" between people, even one's opponents, instead of exclusively considering one's own individual needs (p. 35). This is where the "self-suffering" of both Gandhi and King is seen as abhorrent by communication scholars like Swartz or Cloud, because such suffering is unfair and unjust. Why, for example, must a victim in a dispute suffer any more than she already has suffered? Why should Robert Parrish Moses and thousands of others have suffered so many physical beatings simply for trying to gain voting rights for African Americans? What about those civil rights supporters, both white and black, who were murdered and are commemorated at the Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery, Alabama? In the Gandhian or Kingian view, if the community is to rise above the conflict and move forward, then that suffering is necessary.

Yet in the eyes of other contemporary scholars of rhetorical theory such suffering appears to be needless and even reprehensible. The disagreement over "self-suffering" is based on many variables that feature in conflicts – for example how much suffering is called for, or how long for that suffering would reasonably continue.

In King's "Letter," for example, King implies that the suffering experienced by 1960s civil rights activists was worth enduring because it would only be short-lived. King anticipated that nonviolent self-suffering would be ending very soon, with the collapse of segregation as an untenable legal and social arrangement in the US – a democracy claiming to espouse equality for all. King envisioned an end to a trajectory of suffering that was as long and old as the slavery-based American republic itself. In his assessment, the activists' sacrifices in the 1950s and 1960s constituted a potent reminder that 200 years of African American suffering were plenty enough.

In contrast, for Swartz or Cloud, absolutely no self-suffering whatsoever, whether in the short or in the long term, is acceptable. Swartz (2005) asserts that, in communicating with one another, participants in a conflict must above all "act against injustice and not waste time in coming to terms with why the oppressor feels justified in perpetuating his/her oppression or support for the … inequities of the status quo" (p. 215). Such a perspective calls for forms of communication that are more combative or, in Gandhi's view, violent. Swartz's perspective may also ignore the proven peacebuilding processes of actively addressing the cultural ways in which oppressors deny that they are culpable of injustice. Bode (2000) believes that Gandhi disdained sacrificing relationships to merely "win an argument or … [accomplish] a selfish" goal (p. 36). Wardy (1998) reminds us that in Plato's *Gorgias* the character Socrates debates whether rhetoric is merely a tricky device or a real "art" similar to philosophy; in our contemporary world another question, that of the allowability of self-suffering in nonviolent strategies of communication, may long remain one of the eternal debates in assessing the utility of rhetoric to socially conscious and justice-oriented communication.

Furthermore, problems relating to forgiveness are heavily loaded with power issues, which are often gendered, so it may not always be advisable to forgive. That is why peacebuilding processes of reconciliation often hinge on simply acknowledging publicly that past harms have occurred, so that people may face the future with a sense of hope (Roberson, 2009). Peacebuilding communication often stops short of asking the harmed parties to forgive what is often unforgiveable crimes against humanity. Thus, while not advising parties to a conflict to forgive, nonviolent communication strategies shift the emphasis to the shared future and resources of the conflicted parties, giving them the incentive and resources to say, in unison, "*Basta!*" (Ury, 2007).

Challenges to the Research, Teaching, and Practice of Nonviolent/Peacebuilding Communication

Much literature exits in the field of communication (among other disciplines) around either the key term or the metaphor of violence. Explorations of discursive, rhetorical, interpersonal, symbolic, group, cultural, and other forms of communicative violence tend to take precedence in terms of the general lens that is used to

discuss and theorize communication as it relates to various kinds of conflict. Meanwhile, productive terms such as nonviolence and peacebuilding tend to be less ubiquitous and certainly appear to be generally much less well understood by researchers in communication than by researchers in other areas of study. While the emphasis on violence in the past has certainly stimulated and can continue to stimulate a fruitful and realistic approach to understanding communication processes of conflict, I believe that, for the field to continue to grow productively, a paradigm shift needs to occur that would at least equally entertain and incorporate theory, practice, and metaphors of nonviolence and peacebuilding into mainstream theoretical and pedagogical enterprises.

Presently treatises on communication and conflict tend to be focused on conflict's stated or implied relationship with violence. Focusing on misuses of power or violence ostensibly equips people with functional communication skills in milieus ranging from interpersonal and relational to intercultural and organizational ones. Communication is presented as a means of managing and resolving normal, everyday conflicts at home, at work, in families, in communities, and in other routine places where communicative interaction occurs. Conflict, if handled in ways that are productive, can be a means to improving our lives.

Yet, despite scholars and educators in the field of communication offering effective communication skills as a way to address conflict fruitfully and nonviolently, at a symbolic level, conflict is frequently overly equated with violence in our field. For instance, the book cover to the second edition of *Competence in Interpersonal Conflict* (Cupach et al., 2010) shows an image of what appears to be a smashed window or a broken mirror. This image projects an upsetting feeling that a serious episode of violence has occurred, which in turn conveys an unhealthy, unproductive, and incompetent way to address conflict. Hence, unfortunately, the book cover does not appear to indicate any "competence" in communication skills to address that violence. Going beyond merely assessing a book by its cover and reaching to the textbook's content, the authors do include a chapter on communication practices for the mediation of conflict – if only the cover of the book conveyed this point instead.

Moreover, Cupach, Canary, and Spitzberg (2010) offer a whole chapter on intimate relationship violence, the content of which appears to directly contradict what is said about conflict and communication in books on gendered communication such as Wood's (2011) *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender and Culture*. Whereas Spitzberg – the male author of chapter 10, titled "Intimate Violence" – offers a somewhat simplistic list of myths about intimate partner violence, the content of female author Wood's treatment of the very same issue directly contradicts such myths. Imagine the confusion of the hapless students taking two different communication courses using these texts simultaneously!

One overarching question that could productively move research and pedagogy toward a more integrated peacebuilding perspective is: What might be the ways in which operative terms such as nonviolence and peacebuilding can be seamlessly introduced, appreciated, and better understood in the field of communication,

especially in venues where communication and conflict analysis occur? In current communication texts on conflict – such as Wilmot and Hocker's (2007) *Interpersonal Conflict* – the concept of nonviolence is not broached until page 220 and page 320 respectively, toward the tag end of the book. It is also problematic that only male paragons of nonviolence tend to be mentioned, while important women leaders in peacebuilding initiatives, such as Wangari Maathai of Kenya (Ringera, 2009) or Shirin Ebadi of Iran, both Nobel Peace Prize laureates, are omitted. The field's emphasis on men and masculine modes of conflict mediation is not, in itself, necessarily problematic, because there are so many wonderful and little known male leaders of nonviolent/peacebuilding communication. Everyone needs to learn more about these men and their nonviolent communication practices. At the same time, however, we need to spend an equal effort on learning about their just as important female counterparts, because, when women and feminine modes of conflict communication are stereotyped or essentialized as mere "feminine style" (Kimble, 2009) – or, worse still, omitted (DeLaure, 2008) – then productive perspectives about nonviolent communication strategies are elided or forgotten.

It is unfortunate that communication and conflict are often equated with or symbolically linked to violence instead of nonviolence or peacebuilding and their associated metaphors (Kuusisto, 2009). It is equally unsettling that peacebuilding communicators are only occasionally or cursorily mentioned, and, when they are, are buried towards the end of the textbook. Such signs appear to reveal a bias in the field of communication, which minimizes or obscures both students' and scholars' understanding of nonviolence and peacebuilding.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Remedies for these shortcomings would be easy enough to implement. For instance, authors could choose to *begin* their textbooks by citing the important contributions of nonviolent activists and peacebuilders and by referring to these activists as models of people who wisely use communication to engage productively with conflict. Such role models demonstrate that communication can be used to manage, reduce, or prevent social and environmental forms of violence and injustice.

Another impediment to conveying peacebuilding that plays an important role in constricting communication and conflict is the comparative lack of discussion about nonviolent communicative strategies such as humor. Although there are numerous treatments of humor in journal articles, presently the subject is absent from many textbooks on theory and best practice in applying communication to conflicts. For both students and scholars, addressing conflict through communication may appear to be overly complex, overwhelming, serious, or just plain boring. Humor does not serve to mock the serious conflicts that many parties have, but rather, as Forester (2009) has demonstrated, it can be a wonderful means of getting parties to communicate more effectively and nonviolently toward resolving

their differences. Forester maintains that humor, when used appropriately, "conveys respect and humility, appreciation and solidarity, shared vulnerability and an abiding sense of possibility" (p. 155). If there is anything that students enjoy engaging with, it is humor. Likewise, great scholarship often draws on apt moments of humor. Communication about conflict need not be all about violence, and it need not consist in the rote learning of processes, which often feels like sheer drudgery for students. When the teacher or speaker shows the nonviolent and peacebuilding applications of humor in conflict scenarios, both scholars and students can gain a sense of the joyful aspects of nonviolent forms of communication, too.

In conclusion, as the field of communication enters the second decade of the new century, adapting and changing to global trends means engaging with ideas that have influenced societies worldwide in positive ways. Researchers, teachers, and students of communication and conflict would benefit from understanding and discussing nonviolence and peacebuilding, which have traditionally been seen as more feminized – and thus as less valued – forms of action and communication. Addressing the dearth, placement, and content of discussions about the concepts and strategies of nonviolence and peacebuilding communication in textbooks and course materials is one easy way to begin to draw on this rich vein of knowledge.

Understanding nonviolent strategies of communication requires that we first seek to understand the sources of violence in our lives. Once the three kinds of violence, *cultural*, *structural*, and *direct*, are better understood, we can turn to successful and productive practices of nonviolent communication to address conflicts at interpersonal, community, regional, national, and international levels. Contrary to cynical media clichés, world peace is possible. Initiating the peacebuilding processes that lead to promoting peace with justice begins with each of us learning and applying nonviolent forms of communication.

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25

Globalization and Cultural Identities
A Contradiction in Terms?

Ana Cristina Correia Gil

The Origins of the Concept of National Identity: Essentialists and Historicists

Nowadays identity is a concept often used in very different contexts. We can use this term in relation to an individual or apply it to a region, to a country, or to a continent. It is even applied to corporations or institutions of any kind. The considerable general use of this term also led to a widespread negative perspective over it, as if its general success were synonymous with less scientific rigor or less serious research.

Some authors find identity to be an abstraction, a fluid concept almost impossible to define. Others find it to be an artifact, an artificial construction built mostly for patriotic purposes. Regarding national identity, Eric Hobsbawm sees it as "the invention of tradition," while Suzanne Citron puts it in the mythological register ("national myth" she calls it). Etienne Balibar is not so radical and uses the phrase "fictional ethnicity"; and Benedict Anderson sees nations as "imagined communities" (all three as quoted in Escolar, Palacios, & Reboratti, 1994, p. 347). Anderson emphasizes the "print-capitalism" as the most important factor in the rise of nationalism (Anderson, 1991/1983, p. 36). Through the dissemination of newspapers and novels, readers begin to see themselves as an "imagined community" (since most of its members will never know each other) with a strong bond to each other, that is, like a nation: "Print-capitalism is what invents nationalism, not *a* particular language per se" (p. 134). Also according to Anderson, the press, when establishing the language (the printed book endures in time), helps to create an image of antiquity, of ancestry, which is central to the idea of nation (p. 44) and to the construction of national memory.

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These authors have in common the idea that the identity of nations is always something constructed, the result of a fictional effort, sometimes not even a reflection of reality. According to this perspective, the general applicability of the term "identity" would be a symptom of its failure as a distinctive defining factor.

This negative view over identity has its roots in the philosophical thinking of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: that of Lord Shaftesbury, Jonathan Richardson, and David Hume about England and of Daniel and Henri D'Aguessau and Montesquieu about France. These authors inaugurated what can be considered an essentialist view on the identity question: for them, each people had its own intrinsic qualities, which were innate and unchangeable: a "national genius."

This was also the case of authors like Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte in Germany, who were later used by the Nazi regime to support xenophobic policies. For Herder, each people's "national genius" – its *Volksgeist* – is a part of the diversity of cultures, of the richness of humanity. In *Another Philosophy of History* (first published in 1774), Herder argues against Enlightenment's universalism, which he considers impoverishing, as each people has its own destiny to fulfill.

With Romantic authors, the idea of a "national soul" able to explain the differences between the peoples of diverse countries reached its peak. National culture became the expression of the "national soul." One of the main concerns of Romanticism, inspired by its patriotic spirit, was to inquire about the roots of nations in the remote Middle Ages. This was a way of legitimating independence and, at the same time, of finding an explanation for the basic traits of the national character. According to this perspective, a people is born with specific ways of being and remains almost immutable across the centuries – it is the ethnic nation. This is only possible because the concept of the "national genius" is based on the notion that national character is quite changeless.

With its German roots, the concept of ethnic nation, defined by authors such as Herder and Fichte, is distinguished by the use of objective criteria such as blood, race, culture, and language. An ethnic nation involves common descent, which means that each individual is involuntarily connected to it, without any possibility of choice. Motivated by the defeat of the Prussian army against Napoleon at Jena in 1806, Fichte appeals to Germanhood in his *Addresses to the German nation* (published in 1807–1808), defending the originality and independence of the German people as an historical nation. Fichte emphasizes the importance of language and the common ethnic basis as distinctive features of German nationalism. Herder, too, considers the nation as having a cultural and social basis, in which language and poetry are the most genuine expression of the people. Herder, as well as Fichte, rejects the hegemony of other cultures in Germany and values the national cultural characteristics.

These authors relegate to a second order the concept of nation-state, because for them ethnicity is the only distinctive feature to be considered in talk about nations. Therefore they follow the ideas of German Romanticism, which is concerned with underpinning national identity in cultural and ethnic backgrounds. According to Romantic nationalism, the national spirit is based on cultural elements such as

language, literature, customs, folklore, art forms, which should be a source of national pride. Ideas of the racial purity and absence of corruption of the German people – a people with a higher historical mission – will be taken to the extreme by Nazism in the twentieth century, leading to eugenic practices and "ethnic cleansing" – an ideology based on the exclusion of social differences, which had its most terrible result in the horrors of the Holocaust.

The determinism of the essentialist view of national identity was highly criticized and gave place to an opposite perspective: the historicist view, which claims that national identity is a result of a series of historical circumstances and is not innate or determined by genetics. Concerning countries, we can say that a nation is not "born" with specific psychological traits but acquires them as time and history go by. This means, for example, that a people is more apathetic or more pugnacious as a result of the repression and lack of liberty it suffered, and not because cowardice or courage are inherent traits in its "national soul" or are stored in its genes.

The concept of "civic nation" centers on the willingness of individuals to form a political community, relegating to a secondary place the sharing of common racial, linguistic, or religious roots. This is the concept that we find in Ernest Renan's *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (*What is a Nation?* – a lecture that Renan gave at the Sorbonne in 1882). In this essay Renan expounds the view that a nation is the result of the passage of time, a construction of complicities between compatriots that results in a feeling of solidarity and fraternity. This view also implies the corresponding feeling of the Other as foreigner, and eventually – in some cases at least – even as enemy. This notion of otherness, that is, the awareness of a difference between "us" (our nation) and the others (foreign nations), is a key factor in the formation of a national feeling, in the recognition of the nation.[1] Jeff McMahan draws attention to "partiality" as an essential element of nationalism: the members of the same nation – "co-nationals" – should be biased in favor of their group, they should give priority to their compatriots instead of foreign citizens or non-members (McMahan, 1997, p. 109).[2]

In *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* the author defines nation in psychological terms, as the repository of an ancient collective memory, but also as a result of the will of its members to aggregate themselves in a politically independent state:

> A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things that, frankly, are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories, the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue the heritage that one has received undivided. … The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifices, and devotion. (Renan, as quoted in Girardet, 1983, p. 65)[3]

Hence the nation is not a given, but something that is built and maintained day by day: "The existence of a nation is … a daily referendum" (*L'existence d'une nation est … un plébiscite de tous les jours*, p. 66).

In this conception of the nation, which was inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, the right of people to self-determination appears fundamental. Kant developed this concept in relation to the individual, stating that his or her will is only free if it comes from within; in this way Kant released the humans from their dependence on external factors such as God, for example. The values are based on the individual him- or herself; therefore the individual begins to determine him- or herself as a free, self-governing, and self-motivated agent. This mechanism of self-determination will be transferred to the nation: the nation has the right to establish itself as an independent community, governed by its own laws, working to develop its own cultural identity, preferably in a just and egalitarian society. It follows from here that the members of a nation have free will, that is, they can each separate from their own nation and join another one, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic roots.

These authors have in common a positivist and rationalist perspective on national identity; they place emphasis on the "way of acting" instead of the "way of being; they consider that nations are built in response to the way their members react to different historical circumstances. Therefore these authors reject the essentialist perspective on nations, which, as we have seen, assumes that national identity is an intrinsic characteristic.

It seems to me that the ideal definition of a nation must connect the two aspects: the ethnic and the civic perspective. In order for a community to become independent and self-determined, it must perforce to go through a consolidation of its identity traits, such as language, ethnicity, religion, tradition, customs, history, myths of origin, and so on. Note, however, that these elements are optional and do not have to be fully present in every nation. There are nations, for example, where several languages are spoken, such as Canada, Belgium, or Switzerland; and in some countries – like the United States – there is coexistence among various religions or ethnic groups.

Will Kymlicka draws attention precisely to the relationship that exists between the ethnic nation and the civic nation as he emphasized that the boundaries between these two concepts are being blurred:

> familiar accounts of the distinction between "ethnic" and "civic" nationalism – according to which the former is concerned with the protection and promotion of a language and culture, whereas the latter is concerned solely with upholding certain principles of liberal democracy – are misconceived. Civic nationalisms, as much as ethnic nationalisms, have involved the protection and dissemination of a common language and societal culture. (Kymlicka, 1997, pp. 64–65, n. 3)

Kymlicka describes the process by which the civic nation protects and disseminates its culture, particularly through institutional tools such as education:

> But the state cannot help but give at least partial establishment to a culture when it decides which language is to be used in public schooling or in the provision of

> state services. And there are many other ways in which governmental decisions and institutions help to sustain particular cultures – for example, decisions about immigration, public holidays, school *curricula*, the drawing of political boundaries, or the division of powers between different levels of government. (Kymlicka, 1997, p. 58)

Defining Cultural Identity

Identity is what makes an object unique, what makes it different from others and original. Therefore it always implies alterity, as an entity is most often defined through comparison with others. As William Connolly puts it, a person shares some characteristics with others and is defined by the differences that make him or her unique:

> An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences, it would not exist in its distinctness and solidarity… Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty. (Connolly, 1991, p. 64, as quoted in Rajchman, 1995, p. 222, n. 2)

As for individual identity, it includes name, age, physical complexion, affiliation, place of birth, profession, and so on, so there are elements that are permanent (like one's place of birth) and elements that are changeable (like one's physical traits or profession) during people's lives. This is also the case for regional or national identities, as these result from a set of elements that can change from time to time. A nation's identity results from a set of traits, namely political – territory, state, constitution – and sociocultural – language, ethnic group, history, myth, religion, art. These sets of elements establish a common collective consciousness shared by the whole nation.

An identity is not built without memory. Identity forming is a process of slowly building networks of traditions as well as affective bonds. It is the same with individuals as it is with nations. Just as every human being is the result of his or her past, victories, and failures, so each nation has a number of important milestones along its individualization vis-à-vis foreign countries. This national memory is shared by the members of that nation, whose identity is also fundamental. Personal identity and national identity intersect, since what we are inevitably includes the land to which we belong, our homeland. There is thus a slow establishment of bonds that pass through affection and fellow feeling by virtue of people sharing a common past – a process similar to the formation of a large family, as Portuguese historian Damião Peres stresses:

> A nation is also a psychological reality – something deeper than a mere group of people living on a certain piece of land with certain characteristics; it is an emotional unit, similar to the family, although larger and with a more complex existence, that presupposes a non-hostile constraint but transcends the essence of that constraint.

> The nation – an affective unity – is the result of human action. If a politically strong impulse creates a state and this state survives the creative effort, fellow feeling [*fraternidade*], generated in times of danger or anxiety, spreads throughout the country and little by little the distinction emerges between "us" and "the others" – it is the national spirit that rises. (Peres, 1992, pp. 38–39)[4]

In this – clearly slow – process of identity construction, the consolidation of collective memory is fundamental. This often implies rituals and commemorative ceremonies that revivify the past, thus ensuring that it does not get lost in the track of time. Symbols such as the national anthem, the flag, and the currency also have this same function. It should be noted that, when a single currency was adopted throughout Europe, each country retained the symbol of its original currency on one side of the common coin. This way the specific identity mark of each member state was preserved.

National identity thus oscillates between reality and idealization. It is true that, in a descriptive perspective, defining the identity of an object is to list a set of characteristics that embody its essence. Furthermore, the identity may also be considered as an idealization that is conveyed to the whole nation and consolidated as collective memory.

National character and cultural identity are two concepts closely related to national identity. While the last one includes political and sociocultural factors, national character has to do with the psychological traits of a certain people. On the basis of psychological features that are more frequent in a national community, one can perceive the character of a nation. Thus national character is a particular psychological configuration shared by the individuals who belong in a specific society. This shared configuration is related to a certain collective mode of behavior and does not invalidate individual variations within the collective pattern. This notion of national character is quite different from the one entertained by essentialists, which was discussed at the beginning of the chapter. The psychological pattern includes changes that acculturation can bring. It is not rigid and immutable, but a dynamic reality that can change according to historical circumstances and as a result of contacts with different cultures.

"Cultural identity" is a much more comprehensive phrase than "national character." It is a broader concept. It does not include a political dimension, like national identity, which considers the nation as a whole, from state to traditions, religion, ways of life. In the anthropological understanding of culture – as it was theorized by Edward Burnett Tylor in his pioneering study *Primitive Culture* (Tylor, 1891/1871) – cultural identity includes not only the psychological traits of a people but the whole way of life of a community, from language, art, religion, and politics to gastronomy and fashion. Each of these aspects reveals a particular life experience, a particular way of looking at the world, as Tylor affirms:

> Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Tylor, 1891/1871, p. 1)

Tylor adopts a descriptive instead of a normative definition of culture, as he considers culture to be the expression of the totality of man's social life. He was the first ethnologist that studied the phenomenon of culture from a general and systematic perspective, in every type of society. His concept of an anthropological meaning of culture rehabilitated the so-called "primitive" human and avoided the hierarchization of cultures. By attacking the Eurocentrism that dominated the evolution of ideas until the nineteenth century, the author of *Primitive Culture* shared with Franz Boas the concept of cultural relativism,[5] which abolished the belief that there are higher and lower (barbarian) cultures. Cultural relativism consists in the recognition of the plurality of human societies, in contrast to the unique nature of civilization. Each culture has its place in society: a culture incorporates a specific way of life, a specific political organization, specific traditions, specific religious beliefs, specific artistic productions, and so on. The anthropological perspective upon culture destroyed the belief that some cultures develop perfect values while others are inferior. In a certain way, this concept opposes Matthew Arnold's idea that culture consists of the best things that were thought and said in the world. Thus culture becomes the mode of living of a certain community.

Globalization

In 1964 Marshall McLuhan launched "the global village," a new concept that applies to a world in which communication is instantaneous and distances are annulled by technological evolution. Progress in communication and in transports allowed drastic changes in society, in economy, in politics. Nations became interdependent, as problems and solutions turned global: transnational corporations settle in different countries and sell the same products in various national markets, inducing a homogenization of world consumerism. Problems like terrorism, human rights, environmental threats, and trade rules have now to be considered in a worldwide perspective. Globalization reinforced the power of international political and economical superstructures that weakened the nation-state model. Nevertheless, a global culture does not survive without memory, without roots in the past. So globalization will not extinguish the nation-states.

It cannot be ignored that new challenges are defying the independence of nation-states around the world; in Europe, such a challenge is the European Constitution. The growing globalization and the increasing power of supranational political and economical structures (like the European Union, for example) have a two-sided effect: on the one hand, these processes seem to make the division between nations unproductive and fragile; on the other hand, the nations react to these threats by strengthening their own consciousness.

Many thinkers find patriotism and nationalism dangerous, as they consider that these concepts stress cultural differences and divisions. Martha Nussbaum, for example, prefers cosmopolitism to patriotism (Nussbaum, 1996). According to

her, it is better that social groups focus on collective action than on the formation of separate national groups.

In fact rigid stereotypes, intolerance, ghettos, and xenophobia can arise from extreme nationalist feelings. Charles Stangor defines stereotypes in a very plain way:

> stereotypes represent the traits that we view as characteristic of social groups, or of individual members of those groups, and particularly those that differentiate groups from each other. In short, they are the traits that come to mind quickly when we think about the groups. (Stangor, 2009, p. 2)

Stereotypes are social representations that have a double effect in social relations: on the one hand, they give people confidence by making them feel that they belong to a community whose members share a certain vision of things. With a stereotyped vision of society the individual has the illusion of controlling the surrounding social environment and, at the same time, he or she has a way of organizing the huge amount of information available. So these "pictures inside the head," as Walter Lippman (1922) calls them, are inevitable in the way we relate to the world, as they organize and structure the complexity of reality.

On the other hand, inaccuracy, negativity, and over-generalization are also characteristics associated with stereotypes (Allport, 1954). Stereotypes can accentuate cultural divisions and intolerance. If the image one has of a certain social group is negative, the tendency to consider every member of that group according to that negative perception is very strong, unless the negative image is corrected through contact and through perception of the diversity of those who form the group. But, if one has a tendency to think of the individual who does not conform to one's image of the group as an exception, then one's stereotyped perspective on that group becomes immutable and the prejudice is perpetuated.

One would expect that the effect of globalization in the second half of the twentieth century was to avoid stereotyping, prejudice, ghettos and any other cultural divisions. One might think that, in a globalized world, people would know each other beyond generalizations and clichés. The existence of a worldwide net does not involve the extinction of regional and national cultures. Instead it reinforces it, namely through the action of the mass media.

The Role of the Mass Media

The construction and the reinforcement of national identities presuppose the articulation of three specific areas involved in the process: the school, the mass media, and the arts. In each of these areas we find similar methods of dealing with the past and present of nations: selection of particular facts from history – a process that entails the erasure of others, considered less significant or less glorifying; rewriting of national history; questioning and reinterpretation of reality, past and present; and construction of a critical perspective over national existence.

In the process of communicating national identity, the concept of representation is fundamental. In some way, to represent an object is to create a different one, which is the result of our perspective of reality. Since the Greek philosophers, this idea has prospered. Plato, in his *Republic*, is skeptical about the ability of human perception to reach reality. As the famous allegory of the cave indicates, human beings see only shadows, never the real object. Representations are thus mere substitutes for the things themselves and may encourage imitation of evil things (incidentally, this explains why Plato expelled artists from his utopian society).

Aristotle has a more positive perception of representation, as he considers it an activity that distinguishes humans from other animals:

> From childhood humans have an instinct for representation, and in this respect they differ from the other animals in that they are far more imitative and learn their first lessons by representing things. (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448^{b}, as quoted in Mitchell, 1990, p. 11, with slight modifications)

Modernity stressed the role of the individual in the process of constructing images of reality. Truth becomes a fluid notion, as it can vary according to each person's point of view. In art, the invention of photography – which apparently renders a much truer version of reality – leads painting on a new path. Impressionists, for example, do not represent a landscape in a single masterpiece. They are aware of the different aspects that nature reveals in different lights and shades and in different parts of the day – as we can see, to take just one example, in Monet's *Rouen's Cathedral* (a series of about fifty paintings he made between 1893 and 1894). His aim was to show the influence of light on our perception of reality and how an object can reveal different aspects each time we look at it, as if it were an entirely new reality.

This notion gave birth to an arbitrariness in the representation of reality, which was in turn the basis of modernism's challenges to the traditional models of representation: abstract theories of art reached and appreciated the "ostensibly nonrepresentational object" (Mitchell, 1990, p. 16). Nevertheless, postmodern culture has recovered human pleasure in imitating objects; and nowadays we live in an "era of 'hyper-representation,'"[6] although this does not mean that we are any closer to reality itself.

All this leads us to say that every representation is partial and contingent, as it leaves the receptor with a specific image of reality but never with reality itself, never with the truth of the world. We don't have a copy of reality: we have different – subjective – versions of the same reality. Objects of representation are never fully accurate or faithful reflections of reality, therefore we intend to denaturalize[7] this concept of representation: "Representations have a strong in-built tendency to self-naturalization, to offering themselves as if what they represented was the definitive truth of the matter" (Prendergast, 2000, p. 9).

From this point of view, attention must be paid not only to the object but also to the subject of representation, as the latter is invested with power and with the

authority to manipulate the way the receptor assimilates reality and interprets the world. It has to be stressed that representations are arbitrary images of the world, which have to be interpreted as giving us particular and subjective views, not the very nature of things. And we call denaturalization the process that, as Christopher Prendergast puts it, "mask[s] that relativity, in the gesture whereby culture and history are made over into an image of the natural"; this is a deconstruction of the "ideological move of power" (Prendergast, 2000, p. 11).

Public opinion should be aware of the contingent nature and partiality of representation, which follows from the fact that any representation is the subjective result of a relation between subject and object. Media literacy has a determining role in the formation of this awareness, as it equips the public with a critical perspective over what comes to it through the mass media.

In the era of "neotelevision," as Umberto Eco called it, the tendency to simplistic reductionism – coupled with the sensationalism that tries to capture the public's attention through strong emotional feelings, exploitation of the element of shock, and bizarre voyeurism – ends up by contaminating the information itself. This is the so-called "info-tainment," where the news itself becomes entertainment and is reported as such. Thus arises a new paradigm of information making – a paradigm characterized by new editorial policies, which are based on the emotional rather than on the rational. In processes related to this type of information, feeling overcomes thinking, so passivity and apathy are stimulated via sensationalist contents, sometimes grotesque and despicable. An emotional reaction is intended and no appeal is made to the reflective functions of the receiver. This "neo-television," instead of contributing to raising the cultural and intellectual standards of individuals and to improving their civic, ethical, and aesthetic education, fosters apathy and numbness in the public – both in the young and in the less young.

Information literacy – news literacy – consists in providing the public with analytical tools and critical skills to filter what is presented by the mass media. Questioning the use of certain images, understanding the intent of the use of slow motion, verifying the relevance of the insistent repetition of a shocking image, weighing the use of a particular verb or adjective against the use of another, considering the sensationalism of a particular title – these are just some examples of small operations that can be internalized and applied in order for the receiver to better decipher the purpose of any message received. It is particularly important, in fact vital, to have an awareness of the actual distance between reality and representation of reality. Taking further this line of thought, we might even claim that there are no pure representations. So everything is representation: a movie, a novel, a piece of news. This does not mean that media literacy involves creating in the public an attitude of suspicion toward the information conveyed by the mass media. But it is true that pure objectivity is impossible, since any portrait of a person or a situation involves choice – of words, of images, of angles of approach.

However, the public should also take note that the journalist, being aware of this limitation of representation, has at its disposal various tools that allow him or her to get closer to the truth – in other words to reality. Thus making sure that one's

sources are certified, cross-checking one's sources, and keeping an open eye for contradictory evidence are examples of professional and ethical methods that ensure that journalists perform their mission of informing the public with accuracy and honesty. In the field of information media literacy must therefore go through these two pathways: on the one hand, the development of analytical capacity of news segments and, on the other hand, taking note of the tools that professionals in the field of journalism have to report the news in a more credible and more rigorous manner and with greater respect for deontology – the ethical codes of the profession.

In fiction and entertainment, only by diversifying the supply of programming and by increasing its quality will one make it possible for the public to develop the ability for a critical and informed judgment on the products of mass media, particularly when it comes to drawing the line between a stereotyped and alienating programme and an original, unexpected, and culturally enriching one. This – the critical consumption of what is presented to us – is also a matter of literacy. And it will certainly contribute to changing the paradigm that opposes high culture (the culture of the elites) to mass culture into another one, in which the relationship between these two forms is dialectical instead of conflicting. As Fredric Jameson puts it, mass culture is no longer considered a hollow form – pure manipulation and commercial brainwashing; in some cases it is even the vehicle of utopias, values, and social concerns and, above all, of aesthetically enriching objects (Jameson, 1979). Like high culture and popular culture, mass culture also deals with the raw material of the drives, archaic wishes, fantasies and anxieties of human beings as well as their hopes, expectations, and utopias. In this approach, mass culture can operate a transformational work on social and political anxieties just as much as the other two forms can; and this capacity should prevent it from being considered an empty distraction or the carrier of a false consciousness. One should recognize, in the products of mass culture, the presence of a positive function of the collective consciousness: its utopian and transcendent potential. Of course not all mass culture artifacts have these qualities, so it is imperative to separate the shallow from the significant ones: the latter revive and give expressions to anxieties about the social order in order to manage them afterwards. Fredric Jameson gives two examples of valuable products of mass culture: Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* and Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*. The utopian message in *The Godfather* is, according to Jameson, in the family itself, seen as a place of utopia and as a symbol of collectivity and raising envy in other, disintegrated collectivities. The Mafia family projects an image of social reintegration through the patriarchal and authoritarian model of the past. In an age of family deterioration and loss of authority, *The Godfather*'s familial group projects a sense of security, order, and protection. Spielberg's movie *Jaws* also has utopian and transcendent potential according to Jameson, as it replaces old class antagonisms between the rich and the poor, which still persist in consumer society, with a new kind of bonds.

Alongside the phenomenon of worldwide mass culture and mass media come the local cultures and the local press. One may think that, in such a globalized

world, where communication has become instant via Internet and other information and communication technologies, journalism, and particularly the regional press, is coming to an end. Presumably regional journalism will be caught in this devastating wave.

We live in an era of globalization, as Marshall McLuhan announced it referring to the world as the "global village." We live in the era of free access to all kinds of information. With a simple click, we have newspapers, radio, television, and books from around the world. The difficulty is to select, from this enormous stream, what truly interests us. The very setting of the text on the Internet calls for dispersion: hypertext leads us to other issues, in such a tortuous spiral that we often forget the place we started from. So is knowledge nowadays: derivative, scattered, nomadic. Apparently rootless.

In spite of the evidence for the phenomenon of globalization, the truth is that people continue to wonder about what is happening in their street, in their neighborhood, in their city. All this is information that, after all, is not sufficiently relevant and comprehensive to figure in a national newspaper. But it matters to many people and has a pivotal role in the local communities and in contact with the migrant ones. The challenge of a regional newspaper is to bring together in its pages three types of information: regional, national, and international. We can ask what is, for example, the relevance of the third type – the international section – in a regional newspaper. For what reason do we find international news in a newspaper that has the purpose of giving local and regional information? The truth is that many readers will get the local newspaper only, without searching for more information; and this fact invests the regional press with the responsibility to expand its boundaries and to give as comprehensive a view as possible of the world "out there." But reporting regional, national, and international news day after day requires a delicate balance in the selection of material, since it involves adding a third kind – local information – to the editorials generally present in newspapers nationwide. The regional newspaper has a special responsibility, since it has to concentrate in the same space these three components. This is one of the paradoxes of regional press: it is required to be geographically limited but simultaneously to offer a "sample" of the most relevant events that occurred in the country and in the world in one day, one week, or one month. Therefore regional journalism is a public service: on the one hand, it allows access to information essential to a relatively small public, but on the other hand it also provides information to the outside, by allowing the national and even the international public to know what is happening in a specific region. This aspect – the overcoming of national borders – is increasingly carried out through the Internet. It is through the local newspaper that the immigrant community will know what is happening in the place where each member has his or her roots and to which he or she still feels connected. So regional journalism also contributes to the consolidation of regional and national identities. It's like an anchor that fixes people to a place and ensures the sharing of knowledge, customs, traditions, that constitute them as human beings with a common past and a common history, but also turned to the present and to the future.

One cannot ignore the fact that the social networks have brought a new dynamic to the speed and flow of journalistic information. On Facebook, for instance, fresh news is being published every second, and this social network is usually the first medium where information is delivered – before reaching the newspaper or being heard on the radio or watched on television. Nowadays there is such a saturation of information that the public is sometimes lost amid so much news. This excess of information should prompt the public to develop a more selective and critical competence. That is why media literacy is crucial to contemporary democratic societies. In this overflow of information regional journalism plays an important role by mapping reality from particularities to more general subjects.

Identity and Globalization: Contradiction or Harmony?

Paradoxically, in opposition to the dangerously homogenizing and globalizing force in society, there is another, which defends local identities, regional and national. This tension between the global and the local has its great example in the nationalist reactions that we see every time European Union issues a measure that can threaten the national identities of its members. Take the case of the controversy over the European Constitution, or the one over the decision of the Council of European finance ministers that national budgets have to sift through the European institutions. These measures unleashed nationalist fury in several European countries, as they tend to be interpreted as interfering with the national sovereignty of member states.

In fact national identities have to be respected and preserved. They function as a counterpoint to the increasing globalization and to the triumph of macro economics, of macro policy – that is, of a uniform global vision that tends to obscure identities circumscribed as national, regional, and local. The answer is not a closed nationalism or a patriotism very attached to the past, which rejects every aspect of globalization. But each nation has to preserve its own traditions, its own language, its own political self-determination, or else it will lose its specificities and its reason to exist as an independent community. Globalization is inevitable, but human beings cannot turn out to be the same all over the world. In consequence regional and national communities must not lose their own identities and melt into a confused blending pot. One of the negative effects of globalization is the risk of destroying difference and of forcing an assimilation caused by a universalist obsession, which annihilates traditions and the exoticisms of different countries and cultures.

Many authors consider nationalisms and the reinforcement of national identities to be a serious danger to contemporary societies and a threat to worldwide development. This is in the first place because nationalism can support the belief that some nations are superior to others; second, because it can encourage the pretension of some nations to dominate others; and, finally, because it may encourage the belief that any action is justified as long as it defends national interests.

In fact, since the beginning of the twentieth century, nationalist feelings assumed a leading role in people's lives. For Joseph Llobera, nationalism – in spite of having its roots in the Middle Ages – is the "the god of modernity," as this author is of the view that nationalism has taken the place of religion in people's lives (Llobera, 1995). According to him, nationalism, just like religion, has its rituals, its symbols of devotion (the flag, the anthem, and the national language), its saints and its heroes, and is prone to bigotry. In many cases national festivities have taken the place of religious celebrations. In this perspective, nationalism appeals to the emotional side of citizens and this explains its rapid success, all the more as it does not require much pedagogy. It is the secular god of our time and it inherited its sacred character from religion. Long before Llobera, Julien Benda, in *La Trahison des clercs* (*The Treason of the Intellectuals*, originally published in 1927) called nationalism a "temporal religion" and Raymond Aron, in *L'Âge des empires et l'avenir de la France* (*The Age of the Empires and the Future of France*, originally published in 1945), labeled it a "secular religion."

In fact the French Revolution of 1789 brought a change in representation and a transfer of legitimacy: national sovereignty was transferred from the king to the nation-state. Before 1789 the king incarnated the nation, so the state and the nation were the king. The formation of nation-states contributed to the development and sharing of nationalist feelings. People started to see themselves as communities that shared common ways of life, common ways of speaking, common traditions, even if the members of these communities did not know each other. To repeat, nations became "imagined communities," as we have seen that Benedict Anderson calls them (Anderson, 1991/1983).

Nevertheless, these "sharing communities" that constitute the nations can adopt extreme positions of discrimination and exclusion toward nonmembers, namely foreigners. Jeff McMahan reflects over the contradiction between what he calls "national partiality" and the right of every human being to be treated equally – that is, the liberal principle that every person is equal to another:

> members of the same nation – conationals – are in many contexts permitted or even required to be partial to one another – that is, that they generally may and often must give some degree of priority to one another's interests over those of foreigners or nonmembers. This commitment to partiality within the nation appears to render nationalism incompatible with the guiding principle of liberalism that all persons are of equal worth and as such are entitled to equal concern and respect. (McMahan, 1997, p. 109)

Therefore there must be, in every nation, a space for interculturality, a guarantee that people coming from different backgrounds and from different countries will be respected as equals. Contemporary societies are "melting pots," a mosaic of diverse communities. According to this perspective, acculturation is inevitable and multiculturalist policies are needed in order for equal rights and equal opportunities to be preserved.

Multiculturalism – a concept created in the United States of America in the 1970s – differs from the idea of intercultural societies. Nowadays almost every society is composed by a great variety of social groups, and the coexistence of different populations is a familiar phenomenon everywhere; this is interculturalism. Multiculturalism, though, is the official, political recognition of cultural plurality by the nation-state and is manifested in the equal treatment of every social and cultural community in public life. The state promotes multiculturalist policies by imposing equal treatment of the diverse cultural groups of the nation and by strongly stressing that these groups' dignity is publicly recognized. This institutional protection of different cultural groups leads in some cases to preferential treatment – what is known as affirmative action – especially in the fields of employment and education.

Negative perspectives over multiculturalism point to the danger of communitarian separatism and excessive societal fragmentation, which can lead to the undermining of national unity. In this way multiculturalism, far from promoting social integration, would result in the complete disintegration of society. However, multiculturalism does not imply divisiveness among cultural communities. It may affirm social differences in order to organize their peaceful and respectful coexistence. It is a way to reconcile universal values with respect for and consideration of particularisms.

Conclusion

The enormous challenge is, then, to articulate the need to preserve national memory, common history, and national heritage with the institutional and political acknowledgment of the rights of people from foreign countries. As Jeff MacMahan puts it:

> The nation must be tamed and domesticated. This requires action at the individual and institutional levels. Individuals must be encouraged to see themselves as more than drones in the national hive, and institutions must be arranged both within and between states, to enable nations to coexist harmoniously while at the same time retaining their autonomy and cultural integrity. (McMahan, 1997, p. 132)[8]

So identity and globalization, far from generating a contradiction, are two harmonious concepts. For ethical and moral reasons, these concepts should not be taken radically, as they can lead either to national chauvinism and xenophobia or to an extinction of national boundaries that would take away from citizens their sense of belonging, security, strength, and stability – values that national affiliation gives them. Nations have to preserve their roots and their reason to be, so as to ensure they can claim their place in the world without being swallowed by social Darwinism – which claims that every nation is in constant struggle for survival and that the ones who refuse to fight will be defeated and dominated. A strong

cultural identity is the basis of national identity and a guarantee of the preservation of a nation's right to self-determination.

Above all, there must be a sense of unity of mankind around moral values such as tolerance, solidarity, and peace. Only in this way can national chauvinism, discrimination, and exclusivity be avoided and will cooperation and mutual aid among nations rule at the international level. National identity should be based on a moderate nationalism, which recognizes shared universal values and the rights of every nation and imposes moral limits to the pursuit of certain aims. Ernesto Laclau (1996) postulates a necessarily dialectic relation between particular groups such as nations and global communities:

> the separation – or better, the right to difference – has to be asserted within a global community – that is, within a space in which that particular group has to coexist with other groups. Now, how could that coexistence be possible without some shared universal values, without a sense of belonging to a community larger than each of the particular groups in question? (Laclau 1996, as quoted in Rajchman, 1995, p. 105)

In conclusion, "identity" and "globalization" are two realities in a dialectical relationship, not in a conflicting or a contradictory one. As Ernesto Laclau very brilliantly puts it, nations cannot survive alone; they have to coexist under certain rules and share certain universal values – the value of human rights, for example. Contemporary nations must therefore set themselves up on a basis of tolerance, acculturation, and multiculturalism.

Notes

1 Walter Feinberg considers the case of domination of one group over another, which leads him to distinguish between a nationalism of exclusion – in which the dominant group in an established state seeks to maintain its own identity either by forcing uniformity on the different groups within its borders or by preventing others from entering its borders and becoming citizens – and a nationalism of resistance – in which the dominated group seeks to forge an identity that separates it from others (Feinberg, 1997, p. 69).

2 As the author notes, this preference clashes with the liberal principle of equality between all individuals.

3 My translation; the original text runs: *Une nation est une âme, un principe spirituel. Deux choses qui, à vrai dire, n'en font qu'une, constituent cette âme, ce principe spirituel. L'une est dans le passé, l'autre dans le présent. L'une est la possession en commun d'un riche legs de souvenirs; l'autre est le consentement actuel, le désir de vivre ensemble, la volonté de continuer à faire valoir l'héritage qu'on a reçu indivis. … La nation, comme l'individu, est l'aboutissement d'un long passé d'efforts, de sacrifices et de dévouements.*

4 My translation; the original text is: *Uma nação é uma realidade de feição psicológica – coisa mais profunda que um mero agregado populacional instalado em certo trato de terreno com determinadas características – uma unidade afectiva, análoga à Família, embora de mais largo âmbito e mais complexa existência, que pressupondo, como ela, um*

condicionalismo não hostil, transcende, contudo, na sua essência esse condicionalismo. A Nação – unidade afectiva – resulta de uma acção humana. Se um veemente impulso de natureza política chega a criar um Estado, e este sobrevive ao esforço criador, a fraternidade, gerada em horas de perigo ou de anseio, difunde-se; pouco a pouco, vai surgindo a distinção entre os nossos e os alheios – é o espírito nacional que desponta.

5 Franz Boas was the first anthropologist who made long and direct observation, *in situ*, of primitive cultures.

6 See, for example, the experiments of photorealism.

7 I follow the concept of naturalization defined by Christopher Prendergast as "the process whereby particular cultural constructions of the world are made to appear as if they were in accordance with nature, permanently and unalterably valid" (Prendergast, 2000, p. 11).

8 The necessity of "taming" or "domesticating" the nation is reinforced by the acknowledgment that individuals tend to be partial to their co-nationals and to reject foreigners, as it happens in every group. Jonathan Glover reinforces this ideia: "This propensity of human beings for identification and hostility even in the case of minimal groups is a puzzling psychological phenomenon" (Glover, 1997, pp. 14–15).

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Cultivation Theory in the Twenty-First Century

Michael Morgan, James Shanahan, and Nancy Signorielli

As we head deeper into the second decade of the twenty-first century, we find ourselves gazing at a variety of electronic screens that continually and increasingly take up our time and attention. Much of our day, whether at work, at home, or at play, is screen-dominated. Yet, even though there are many different types of screens in our lives, the one we still spend the most time with is the television screen. Most of us spend many hours a day with television content whether we're watching it on the big-screen TV in our family room or living room, on the smaller TV in the kitchen, or on a computer, an iPad, a smartphone, or some other new device yet to come.

In these circumstances television, in any venue, continues to be our nation's and the world's storyteller, telling most of the stories to most of the people most of the time. It remains our most common and constant learning environment, one that very few people can (or even want to) escape or ignore. Children today are born into homes in which most stories are told by centralized commercial institutions rather than by parents, peers, schools, or the church. Television shows and tells us about life – who wins, who loses, who is powerful and who is weak – as well as who is happy and who is sad. Television is the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (usually cloaked in the form of entertainment) of otherwise heterogeneous populations. It offers a continual flow of stories (myths, "facts," lessons, and so on) that serve to define the world and legitimize a particular social order.

Television is only one of many media forms that help explain the world. Indeed, children today grow up in a multimedia, multitasking environment, and their total media time adds up to over 11 hours a day; still, the bulk of that interaction is with television (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Even with all the different digital

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venues and hot new media technologies available, television today still garners most of the viewers and most of the advertising dollars.

What is important about television is that its version of reality is generated by a small number of multinational media conglomerates that dominate the cultural symbolic environment with stable and consistent messages about life and society. The views of reality they offer are not much different from those found in other media or imparted by other powerful socialization agents, but we encounter them on television far more frequently and in more vivid and "entertaining" servings.

Thus, despite the emergence of so many specialized new channels and so many different types of programs that are often targeted to smaller and smaller audiences, television as an institution continues to provide common images to virtually all members of society, and its key messages and lessons – about violence, gender, race, class, power, consumption, and other fundamental ideological dimensions – cut across different programs and channels. Most importantly, even with the rise of the Internet and the availability of more and more alternative options, not only do people still spend more time with television than with any other medium, but also the amount of time they spend watching television *still* continues to increase.

Since television's inception there has been concern about its effects. The popular press and the government continue to ask what television and other media do to us. Teachers and parents wonder whether television makes children more aggressive, or whether it helps or hinders learning. Although seemingly simple, these questions are complex and the answers are far from straightforward. These questions have become no less urgent – and even more challenging – in the context of the explosion of new digital technologies such as video games, social media, and the Internet.

George Gerbner (1919–2005) devised a new and unique way to think about media effects in the late 1960s (Gerbner, 1969). He called his approach "cultivation"; its goal was to help us understand the consequences of growing up and living in a cultural environment dominated by mediated mass communication. He emphasized television because television nearly monopolized people's cultural participation and public debate in those days; radio, newspapers, films, and other mass media of the mid-twentieth century (before the rise of the Internet) all played relatively subordinate roles.

Gerbner's research paradigm was designed to investigate (1) the institutional processes that underlie the media and the production of its content; (2) the most prevalent images in media content; and (3) the relationships between media exposure and audience beliefs and behaviors (Gerbner, 1973). The approach can be applied to any dominant medium, but cultivation analysis was designed especially to assess the contribution that television viewing makes to people's conceptions of social reality. In its simplest form, cultivation analysis asks if people who watch more television have views that are more reflective of what they see on television than people who have similar demographic characteristics but watch less television (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2009).

Researchers inspired by Gerbner's ideas have been remarkably prolific. As of 2010, more than 500 relevant studies have been published (two thirds of which are extensions, replications, reviews, and critiques conducted by independent researchers not associated with Gerbner and the original research team). The earliest cultivation studies investigated how television viewing contributed to beliefs and conceptions of violence and victimization, but the research soon expanded to include many other aspects of life and society, for instance gender roles, minority and age-role stereotypes, health, science, the family, educational achievement and aspirations, politics, religion, the environment – and numerous other topics, many of which have also been examined in a variety of cross-cultural comparative contexts. Indeed, by now cultivation studies have been carried out in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, England, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, and elsewhere (an extensive examination of the cultivation literature may be found in Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Cultivation, along with agenda setting and uses and gratifications, is one of the three most cited theories in mass communication research published in key scholarly journals between 1956 and 2000 (Bryant & Miron, 2004). In addition, an analysis of 962 articles on media effects articles published in 16 journals between 1993 and 2005 found that cultivation was *the* most cited theory (Potter & Riddle, 2007).

The methods and assumptions of cultivation analysis differ from those traditionally found in mass communication research. Research on media effects has often focused on how specific or individual messages produce some sort of change in people's behaviors or attitudes. Traditionally, media effects research has often focused on what types of messages can be particularly persuasive for advertising or for political and other types of campaigns, or on how specific messages, for example about violence, might immediately influence children's behaviors.

Cultivation analysis, on the other hand, is concerned with the long-term, more general and pervasive consequences of cumulative exposure to television's messages. It starts from the assumption that the primary function of mass communication is not change, but stabilization and the perpetuation of dominant power structures. Gerbner saw culture as "a system of messages and images that regulates and reproduces social relations" (Gerbner, 1990, p. 250). In other words, culture is a system of mass-produced stories "that mediates between existence and consciousness of existence, and thereby contributes to both" (p. 251). As a result, the mediated messages and images that surround us both *reflect* and *reproduce* the ways we think about the world.

Unlike many models of media effects that study "change," cultivation does not imply a simple, linear, "stimulus–response" model or immediate short-term responses to media messages. Rather the focus is on long-term cumulative exposure to television's repetitive and stable messages, which persist despite the increased channel offerings available to most viewers. Cultivation represents the independent contribution of television viewing to people's conceptions of social reality. For Gerbner, then, cultivation meant that living in a symbolic environment

that reveals social and institutional dynamics, such as that found in television programs, creates a collective consciousness.

"Doing Cultivation"

Cultivation studies typically begin by identifying and assessing the most recurrent and stable patterns in television content, looking for those images and values that cut across most program genres. Beginning with studies conducted by the original team of researchers, week-long samples of prime-time television programming have now been analyzed by trained coders each year since 1967. Over more than four decades, these studies have examined numerous elements of programming – violence, sex roles, race, science, health, and more – revealing broad trends of change and stability over time.

The analyses of television violence, for example, have found that violence is a prevalent theme in programming: it occurs in about 60 percent of prime-time programs, at a rate of about five acts of violence per program, with relatively small variations over the years. Similarly, studies about sex roles have found that women have been consistently under-represented during prime-time programs. While there has been a decided increase in the percentage of women depicted on television, the most recent analyses show that, since the mid-1990s, women have made up only 40 percent of major characters. Finally, studies of the racial makeup of prime time programs have found that, up until the 2008–2010 seasons, the percentage of black characters in television programs had equaled the percentage of blacks in the US population, mostly because of the large numbers of situation comedies, including many with all-minority casts. Most recent samples, however, show that this is no longer the case, as there are fewer situation comedies being broadcast on networks, which now tend to favor less expensive program formats (such as reality programs).

The findings from these analyses are used to generate questions designed to uncover people's conceptions about social reality. These questions are then posed to samples of children, adolescents, or adults using standard techniques of survey methodology. In addition, some cultivation analyses use existing data sets – such as National Opinion Research Center (NORC)'s General Social Survey – with the methods of secondary analysis. A key element in these surveys is the assessment of television viewing. Questions about viewing typically ask how much time the respondent watches television on an average day. The analyses then categorize light, medium, and heavy viewers on a sample-by-sample basis. Hence the analyses look for differences in overall amount of viewing – that is, in terms of exposure to the overall message system of television – and are not based on amount of exposure to selected genres or types of shows. The questions about social reality used in cultivation analysis do not mention television but rather provide answers that reflect either the dominant views/images seen *on television* or those found *in reality*. The resulting relationships between the amount of viewing and the tendency

to respond in terms of what is seen on television reflect television's contribution to viewers' conceptions of social reality (cultivation).

Those who watch more television are different from those who watch less television in many ways. Although all demographic groups have people who watch more or less television, there are overall differences between those who watch more and those who watch less in terms of sex, age, education, income, occupation, race, and other demographic and social variables. Accordingly, cultivation patterns are always examined controlling for these other background factors – both within specific subgroups (people with more versus people with less education, males versus females, and so on) and across different subgroups (this is done through more sophisticated statistical techniques, which control for multiple variables simultaneously).

Everyone "lives" to some extent in the manufactured commercial culture of television, but heavy viewers are immersed a little more deeply in its dominant currents. By the same token, cultivation analysis assumes that those who watch less television are exposed to more varied and diverse information (from both mediated and interpersonal sources) than those who watch more television. It stands to reason that, if you spend most of your time watching television, you will have less free time to explore other options, which might provide different views or information about the world. Consequently cultivation theory predicts that the more time a person spends watching television and being immersed in this mediated world, the more likely that person's views about reality will reflect what is seen on television.

For example, cultivation studies have found that those who spend more time watching television are more likely to believe that they will be involved in violence; to have exaggerated conceptions of danger, mistrust, and victimization; and to hold inaccurate beliefs about crime and law enforcement. In short, those who watch more television say that you cannot "be too careful" in dealing with people, that most people are "just looking out for themselves" and "cannot be trusted," and that there are more people in law enforcement occupations than real-world job statistics show (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980; Signorielli, 1990). This pattern of conceptions became known as "the mean world syndrome."

Evidence of Cultivation

Like many media effects studies, cultivation analyses typically generate small effect sizes. As even those who watch very little television may watch 7 to 10 hours a week and certainly interact with those who watch more television, the cards are stacked against very strong evidence of cultivation. Still, even small differences between light and heavy viewers may indicate far-reaching consequences. As a difference of one percentage point in ratings indicates the success or failure of a television program and a difference of a few percentage points (or less) in an election determines who wins or who loses, so can a small correlation between

television exposure and outlook be indicative of a phenomenon that cumulates toward a very significant impact.

Variations in cultivation: *Resonance* and *mainstreaming*

Cultivation is a continual and dynamic process, not a unidirectional flow of influence from television to viewers; and research has found two processes that reflect differences in how cultivation may work. Direct experience may be important for some viewers; the phenomenon called *resonance* illustrates how a person's everyday reality and patterns of television viewing may provide a double dose of messages that "resonate" and amplify cultivation. For example, those who live in high-crime urban areas often show stronger relationships between amount of viewing and self-reported fear of crime.

The second phenomenon, *mainstreaming*, suggests that television viewing may enhance similarities among otherwise divergent groups of people. Television and other media venues provide a shared daily ritual of highly compelling and informative content for a diverse set of viewers. Media images seen on television or in other venues tend to erase boundaries of age, class, and region. Consequently "the mainstream" is a relative commonality of outlooks and values that is cultivated through consistent and heavy exposure to the world of television. *Mainstreaming* means that heavy viewing or media exposure may override differences in perspectives and behavior that result from other factors and influences. In other words, attitudes or behaviors that, when present, would ordinarily be attributed to social or political characteristics may be diminished or absent in groups of heavy television viewers or media users.

For example, among light viewers, the beliefs of those who describe themselves as liberal or as conservative are often very different on many topics. But, when heavy television viewers are asked questions related to these same topics, liberals may give responses that are relatively conservative, and the conservatives may give responses that are relatively liberal. Heavy viewers are often more likely to call themselves moderate (versus liberal or conservative), while their attitudes tend to converge toward conservative positions on social issues (such as gender, race, sexuality, freedom of speech, and the like) and toward liberal positions on economic issues. In short, *mainstreaming* gives a sense that television cultivates common perspectives and a relative homogenization, thus illustrating how television viewing has become the true melting pot of the American people and, increasingly, of the world.

Diversity in Cultivation Research

Few theories of media effects (and perhaps few areas of social research in general) have been critiqued as heavily and fiercely as cultivation. (For some examples, see Hirsch, 1980; Hughes, 1980; Potter, 1993, 1994; as well as Shanahan & Morgan's 1999 discussion.) These critiques have focused on many diverse issues, including

cultivation's emphasis on overall amount of television exposure (as opposed to exposure to specific types of programs), the way television viewing is measured and divided into relative levels of exposure, justifications for interpreting television world answers, the linearity of cultivation associations, and many more. Some of the most heated issues of contention have revolved around questions of spuriousness and the proper use of statistical controls. The volume of these critiques has diminished somewhat recently, particularly as investigators have pushed toward refining the theory rather than trying to discard it. In this atmosphere research has proliferated.

Throughout the years there have been many distinct and often divergent viewpoints on how cultivation analysis should be done, as well as a tremendous variety of studies, all connected in some way under the umbrella of "cultivation." The first anthology of cultivation studies was published in 1990 (Signorielli & Morgan, 1990). That collection examined several different topics and trends, including psychological processes in cultivation, new media, pornography, and religion. In the past twenty-plus years more and more studies have been published under the general rubric of cultivation, some focusing on the topics and trends suggested in that first anthology and some opening up even more avenues to explore. These recent studies/approaches have been gathered in a second cultivation anthology (Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2012). What follows is a brief review of some of the more interesting paths cultivation research has taken in the past 20 years.

First- and second-order effects

Some researchers have proposed that it is important to distinguish between what has been described as "first-" and "second-order" effects in the types of questions asked in cultivation analyses. Questions isolating first-order effects are those that deal with estimates, typically quantitative, of the frequency or probability that something will occur in the world; these questions have an answer grounded in fact, such as one's chances of being involved in violence, or the number of people who work in law enforcement. Questions examining second-order effects, on the other hand, deal with relationships between viewing and holding attitudes/conceptions or making value judgments about social reality.

For example, the notion of the mean world syndrome does not make any reference to or assumptions about how mean or trustworthy people actually are in the real world. Similarly, the under-representation of women on television would not be likely to convince viewers that there are fewer women in the real world (a first-order belief), but it may well be taken as an indicator of devaluation and restriction that supports the cultivation of traditional gender roles (a second-order belief). Shrum (2004, 2012) has found that the distinction between first- and second-order judgments is critical to understanding cultivation, as the two types of questions are based on entirely different psychological processes.

Cognitive processes and perceived realism

Gerbner believed that an understanding of the cognitive processes of cultivation was not of particular importance, because he assumed the processes involved in cultivation were simply those through which people learned things about the world and their environment in general. Nevertheless, the work of Shrum (1999, 2001, 2012) has consistently shown that heuristic processing (using mental shortcuts) is central to learning about social reality and that we typically do not take the source of our information (e.g., television) into consideration unless specifically asked. And, when such information is taken into account, cultivation effects are not usually found. This body of work on cognitive processing of media messages has provided a substantial degree of external validity to cultivation theory.

Similarly, others have examined the notion of "realism," particularly "perceived realism," as a critical component in understanding cultivation. While many researchers have thought that only programs perceived as "realistic" would influence beliefs about the world, recent research shows that the answer is not that simple. For example, Busselle and Bilandzic (2012) suggest that perceived realism is a "default" condition; we just assume that content is realistic unless there is a specific reason not to. Most content, even that recognized as fantasy, has some element of perceived realism, and viewers carry impressions from television to their understanding of the real world. Bilandzic and Busselle (2008) also propose a model in which narrative "transportation" (adopting a less critical mindset and/or becoming completely "involved" in a story) is a key element in cultivation. Their findings suggest that "transportability" may be a personality trait that increases cultivation.

Cultivation in the international arena

Thirty years ago cultivation was beginning to be explored in different countries and cultures. One of the first attempts to replicate cultivation took place in the UK. Wober (1978) used the lack of findings there to argue that the theory did not work. In response to this claim, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli (1979) argued that the television systems in these two cultures (US and UK) were so different that cultivation could not reasonably be expected to occur. On the other hand, Pingree and Hawkins (1981) found that Australian students who watched more US television, particularly crime and adventure programs, had higher scores on "mean world" and "violence in society" indices measuring conceptions about Australia, but not about the US. In the ensuing years there have been many studies of cultivation in international venues, and these comparative analyses provide a rich perspective on the dynamics of the diverse constellations of media messages, cultural systems, and political/commercial controls and constraints found around the world. These studies often find that, when television is less repetitive and homogeneous than what is seen in the US, cultivation analysis results may be less predictable and consistent. However, when programming is less diversified and more dominated by commercial interests, cultivation is more often found.

In many countries today television has changed and is becoming more similar to the US commercial model. Nevertheless, around the globe the US still dominates in exporting media, and US programs are often staples in international viewing environments, many US channels being delivered via cable or satellite. Interestingly, even though many countries are now able to produce their own programs in local languages, audiences demand tried and true story formats, including locally produced versions of programs such as *American Idol*, *Survivor*, and *Big Brother*. Consequently, the possibilities for cultivation internationally are increasing.

Van den Bulck's (2012) research has moved international cultivation to a more solid theoretical footing. His own research in Belgium focuses on how television affects people when it is not from their own country. He has found that the culture of American TV is so far-reaching that prisoners in Belgium think they will be read their Miranda rights. In addition, Van den Bulck has found that television is important not only to native populations ("primary cultivation") but also to visitors, immigrants, and those outside of the country where the content was produced.

Program genre and cultivation

Over the years, numerous researchers have questioned whether exposure to specific genres of media messages should be a critical component in understanding the cultivation phenomenon and associated effects. In Gerbner's original formulation – an approach still followed by many cultivation scholars today – television exposure is measured by assessing overall amount of viewing, typically by asking how much television is watched on a typical day, not what specific programs or genres are viewed. "Classic" cultivation is thus concerned with the long-term and long-range effects of living with television in general. As Shanahan and Morgan (1999) note, it "is the pattern of settings, casting, social typing, action and related outcomes that cuts across program types and viewing modes and defines the world of television" (p. 30). Consequently, these studies predict that those who watch more, television's heavy viewers, see more of these images and messages on a regular basis and their views of social reality are influenced by the messages and images they see day in and day out.

Others believe that cultivation research should focus on specific genres of programs, because they assume that different types of programs present diverse views of the world and cultivate distinct conceptions of social reality. Cohen and Weimann (2000) note that different genres, although typically formula-driven, present viewers with diverse views about the world. News, crime, and action programs and programs that explore current events, for example, are thought to focus on the social order, examining public rather than domestic life and typically distinguishing right from wrong. The plots of these programs examine events and action, with the characters presenting the motives and the context for the events. On the other hand, situation comedies, family dramas, and soap operas, again formulaic in nature, focus on domestic issues, family relationships, and friendships.

Similarly, Grabe and Drew (2007) suggest that one of the reasons why scholars have examined possible genre-related cultivation differences is that content analyses typically show variation in portrayals among genres. Situation and romantic comedies present different types of stories from those of crime dramas, and the former genres have considerably less violence than the latter. The emergence of varying kinds of "reality" programs, from *The Biggest Loser* to *Jersey Shore* to *The Bachelor* to *American Idol*, only adds more apparent diversity.

In particular, some researchers postulate that viewers' conceptions about fear and violence are the result of genre-specific viewing, namely viewing of crime-related programming. Despite the knowledge that television's crime programs typically distort statistics about crime in society, several studies show relationships between conceptions about crime and the viewing of crime programs. For example, Holbert, Shah, and Kwak (2004), using a national probability sample, found that viewing television news and police reality programs was related to measures of fear of crime, but that viewing crime dramas was not. This analysis also found that nonfiction viewing (such as police reality programs) tended to be more strongly related to conceptions of social reality than the viewing of fictional crime dramas. The researchers interpreted this difference as due to the increased perceived realism of the police reality programs. In line with these findings, there is some evidence that events (exemplars) more likely to be seen in the media are more readily accessible in memory than events that are actually experienced. Consequently, those who spend more time viewing programs revolving around these types of events are more likely to show some evidence of cultivation-related characteristics (Busselle & Shrum, 2003).

Viewing specific genres of programming may also be related to sex role stereotypes. For example, Ward, Merrywether, and Caruthers (2006) found that male undergraduates, who frequently read male-oriented magazines, consistently watched the top 35 prime-time comedies and dramas, were more cognitively "involved" with television programs, and watched music videos, expressed support for traditional masculine ideals. They were more likely to see women as sex objects, to think that men are more sexually driven than women, and to perceive dating as a "battle of the sexes" (p. 712). These authors note that, "by frequently reducing women to sexual objects, media content may make it difficult for men to see women any other way" (p. 714).

While relationships between television viewing and conceptions about marriage have been found in the traditional cultivation paradigm (Signorielli, 1991), genre-specific viewing may be related in different ways to conceptions about marital expectations. Segrin and Nabi (2002), studying a sample of college students, found that both idealized views ("marriage is forever," "I will be married for life to the same person") and expressing intentions to marry soon were positively related to viewing programs that focus on romance, close personal relationships, and marriage (soap operas, romantic comedies, wedding-related programs). Overall viewing, however, was slightly *negatively* related to these concepts. These authors also speculate that the respondents' exposure, as children, to

romance-filled programs such as Disney movies may have contributed to expectations about marriage as young adults, and that romance-oriented messages may have specific consequences that differ from those of the overall system of messages.

There is also some evidence that exposure to specific types of content is related to respondents' conceptions about sex. Pardun, L'Engle, and Brown (2005) found that young adolescents who had greater exposure to sexual content were more likely to be active sexually or to express future intentions of sexual activity. Those who watched movies with sexual themes also were more likely to say that they were sexually active and intended to be sexually active in the future.

Finally, there is evidence that viewing different genres of programming is related to respondents having different perceptions about whites and blacks. Busselle and Crandall (2002), using a sample of undergraduates, found that viewing situation comedies was related to having higher estimates of blacks' education levels and to having perceptions that there are fewer differences between the educational levels of blacks and whites. On the other hand, viewing television drama was related to a sense that whites are better educated than blacks and that there are greater differences in the amount of education whites and blacks have. Further, the viewing of dramas was related to the respondents' belief that blacks' lack of socioeconomic success was due to discrimination. News viewing among these undergraduates was not related to estimates of education but to notions of modern racism. More news viewing and perceptions about the lack of socioeconomic success of blacks were positively related to saying that blacks lacked motivation and that blacks did not have fewer job opportunities.

We thus find that there are many instances in which exposure to very specific media, particularly specific genres of television programs, is related to specific views about the world and social reality. One of the questions that must, however, be addressed is whether or not most people actually watch programs in just one or two specific genres on a day-to-day basis. If people state that they have a preference for watching a specific genre, does their overall media use actually encompass viewing many different types of programs as well as using other media such as magazines and newspapers, whether in hand or on line? Most importantly, while the full understanding of genre in relation to cultivation depends upon the content to which people are exposed, many of the above described studies did not begin with a genre-related content analysis. Consequently, without specific data to the contrary, it stands to reason that, although someone may profess to having a television diet consisting primarily of viewing crime programs such as the *Law and Order* or *CSI* series, the images to which they are exposed may go far beyond just crime and violence. For example, while *Law and Order* and *CSI* are based primarily on the investigation of crime, these programs also focus on interpersonal and family relationships, as well as on other thematic elements showing how the world works. Consequently heavy viewers of these programs will not only learn about crime and violence, they will also take important life lessons about how people interact with each other. Similarly, while medical programs may certainly teach some lessons

about doctors, it should be remembered that messages about doctors are not restricted to medical programs. The point is that while light viewers may be selective and particular in their viewing choices, *heavy* viewers, by definition, will see more of everything.

Interestingly, variations in cultivation, namely *resonance* and *mainstreaming*, are rarely examined in genre studies. For example, although *resonance* might be an important explanatory concept for genre-related studies, most genre studies to date have not discussed this possible variation. Similarly, most studies that explore *mainstreaming* focus on overall viewing levels of exposure rather than looking at the viewing of specific genres of programs. Consequently these important cultivation-related concepts have not really been considered in the kind of cultivation research that limits viewing to specific genres.

The notion that media genre is a critical component in assessing the phenomenon of cultivation goes against one of the basic tenets or assumptions of cultivation. As Shanahan and Morgan (1999) note, "what counts most is the total pattern of programming to which communities are exposed over long periods of time" (p. 31). Moreover, there is the possible problem that viewers and researchers may not define genres in the same way. In addition, there is also the possibility that genre-specific studies may uncover trivial rather than general effects (Shanahan and Morgan, 1999). Gerbner, for example, believed that different genres of television raised research questions different from those of cultivation. He did not say that all types of programs were completely identical in content, but rather that they had a lot in common and that the differences were complementary. Consequently, it might be argued that the studies that focus primarily upon media genres are not true studies of cultivation. Rather these studies might be better described as dealing with specific rather than general media effects; and the former would best fit within a universal learning theory paradigm rather than within the cultivation paradigm. Interestingly, while Bilandzic and Busselle (2012) are strong advocates of examining genres, they see genre as simply another important facet of narrative, consistently with Gerbner's original outlook on cultivation. Moreover, the critical issue is the overall aggregate or *system* of messages found in all program genres that expose viewers to an "essentially coherent structure of conceptions about life and the world"; understanding this system forms the basic aim in cultivation (Gerbner, 1990, p. 256). As Shanahan and Morgan (1999, p. 28) argue, in cultivation research it is the "bucket, not the drops" that matters most.

Gerbner often argued that the overall symbolic environment constitutes the boundary conditions within which individual choices and selections are made. On the one hand, the media landscape has changed enormously since Gerbner first developed his theories, and in a 500-channel universe with infinite online options the very concept of genre exposure means something different from what it meant in a television system dominated by three broadcast networks. Moreover, genre-specific cultivation studies appear now not only regularly, but they may have become the *most* common type of cultivation research. Nevertheless, we hope that

researchers will not lose track of the role of the global symbolic environment that gives shape and meaning to its component parts.

New Media

Beyond the role of genre, it is obvious that many other aspects of the media environment have changed profoundly in the past 40 years. Since the 1950s and 1960s the way we receive the media has evolved from strictly broadcast television (with community antenna TV in some of the more remote and rural areas of the country), theatrical films, or print media (newspapers, magazines, books) to the current broad-based electronic digital media environment. In the case of television, until the 1980s ABC (American Broadcasting Company), CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), and NBC (National Broadcasting Company) had the lion's share of the audience. There were only a few independent stations in each market, films were seen in theaters, or on television several years after the end of their theatrical run, while books, magazines, and newspapers were physical entities purchased in bookstores, supermarkets, drug stores, or at newsstands. Today, however, cable or satellite systems provide homes with hundreds of channels, and many homes can receive thousands of programs and movies on demand. The Internet gives instant access to virtually any film or television show ever made (sometimes legally, sometimes not). While many movies are still released in theaters, more and more films have a truncated theatrical run, so they can quickly enter the more lucrative after market of cable movie packages, DVDs, or (increasingly) downloading/streaming. In addition, some films are now produced *solely* for the home video market. Finally, although we can still purchase physical copies of newspapers, magazines, and books, more and more of us consume these media electronically; on-line sources, such as Amazon.com, sell electronic versions of books as well as the technology needed to "read" them.

Although the way we now receive our "stories" has changed (no matter whether the stories are fiction, news, or reality programs and whether we receive them in an interactive, a selective, or a virtual environment), we tend to forget that their content – arguably – has not changed; if anything, it has become even more formulaic and homogeneous. Today's media are dominated more than ever by massive transnational, global conglomerates whose goal is to maintain a large share of the audience and to increase profits. Indeed, even as there are more and more channels and more and more outlets, there are fewer and fewer companies responsible for creating the content to fill these venues – and owning the content, *and* the channels, *and* the "pipes" that bring them into our homes. The number of these transnational companies continues to become smaller and smaller, Disney, Time Warner, Bertelsman, Comcast/NBC, Viacom, and News Corp being among the largest and most influential.

Certainly today's expanded *technological* media environment provides more content-specific programs dealing with any number of life-related issues (weddings,

divorces, courts, food, pets, and so on), as well as the traditional fictional "stories." At the same time, the structure of the industry, with its small number of media companies, produces messages about the world, its inhabitants, and how they work that are perhaps becoming more similar over time. Consequently, the smaller number of production venues may result in a homogeneous rather than heterogeneous media environment. Cultivation has always been concerned with the broad underlying elements of content and with how audiences interact with these messages. Indeed, as Shanahan and Morgan (1999) note, "the content of messages is more germane than the technology with which they are delivered" (p. 201).

In light of this, new technologies do not necessarily invalidate cultivation as an important way to explain the media's impact upon viewers. Beginning with studies of the impact of the VCR on viewing and cultivation, Morgan, Shanahan, and Harris (1990) found that, rather than detracting from cultivation, the VCR actually served to amplify cultivation findings, by allowing heavy viewers to watch "more of the same." Similarly, Dobrow (1990) found that those who typically watched more television (heavy viewers) used the VCR to extend their viewing habits, while those who watched less television (light viewers) became even more selective in what they chose to watch. Likewise, Perse, Ferguson, & McLeod (1994) found that those who spent more time watching video-taped movies expressed greater interpersonal mistrust than those who did not watch as many movies.

Many also predicted that the spread of cable would mean the end of cultivation. Yet, given industry constraints and practices, cable typically delivers more of the same type of messages, as many cable channels depend upon syndicated network programs to fill most of their programming needs. At the same time cable also professes to provide "new" and seemingly more diverse programming for viewers. In line with this, cable has fewer constraints; and some recent studies of content have found that programs produced only for the cable market often contain more violence and sex than traditional network offerings (Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Overall, however, the changes that cable has brought to viewing practices are mostly on the surface. As Shanahan and Morgan (1999) note, "people are still using their free time to view televised entertainment," and there has not really been "a reduction in our overall exposure to typical mainstream entertainment programs" (p. 208). In short, cable is an outlet that provides an intensified version of traditional network fare.

Cable may thus have some impact on cultivation findings, but typically in the directions and ways we would expect from traditional heavy viewing of network programming, because cable still provides mass produced programs made by a small number of concentrated media organizations (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Morgan and Rothschild (1983), for example, found that, in homes with cable, the cultivation of traditional sex-role perceptions was stronger than in homes without cable. Perse, Ferguson, and McLeod (1994) found that respondents who had cable subscriptions expressed stronger feelings of interpersonal mistrust, particularly if these respondents tended to use cable to watch typical network broadcast-type programs. At the same time respondents who viewed more specialized cable

offerings (A&E, C-Span, Discovery channel, and the like) did not express greater fear or interpersonal mistrust.

The big question that now faces the study of media effects is how today's increasingly interactive media environment will change the ways in which the media influence their users. As computer technology has become more powerful and more affordable for the average person, children's education has become more tied to having access to computers and the Internet. As of October 2010, 80 percent of US households use the Internet (http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s1157.pdf). The question then arises as to how cultivation may relate to the Internet. Morgan & Shanahan (2010) argue that the Internet has not changed the fundamental tenets of cultivation. Along with digital video recorders, the Internet has actually *increased* the audience for the traditional broadcast networks, through sites such as Hulu. Mass-produced commercial storytelling still predominates, now through other "screens" as well as the traditional television set. Consequently it is still reasonable to look for cultivation, even if those other screens are now mobile and programs can now be watched more or less at will. Thus new technologies have made it easier to watch what, when, and even where we want, but at the same time they allow us to watch even more. Yet, even though there are ever more channels to watch, it has become increasingly important to look at the common messages and lessons that permeate these images, because in today's global media environment links between production and distribution are becoming ever more intertwined.

Some new media, such as video games and social networking, are getting increased research attention. To the extent that these new media are now narrative devices, cultivation induced by them may be a reasonable possibility. When the Internet is used to read email, to check a friend's Facebook status, or to "tweet," something else is happening, a process more akin to interpersonal communication than to mass-produced storytelling, and cultivation may be less relevant. But, while the Internet as a medium does not offer a consistent "message" or a set of stories, watching TV programs on the Internet is still, fundamentally, "watching TV." Indeed, as Morgan and Shanahan note,

> the future paradigmatic status of cultivation and other related theories depends in large part on future developments in media institutions and technologies. Although the traditional business model of broadcast television may be in peril, we think it's safe to say that television will remain our primary cultural storyteller for some time to come. (Morgan and Shanahan, 2010, p. 351)

Continuing research in the cultivation tradition thus must begin to assess the more general content of the Internet, specifically to determine if those who spend time with computers, using it as a primary entertainment venue, come to view the world in much the same way as they see it in the messages they receive on their computers. But it is critical for new studies to ascertain whether the messages found in these computer venues present the same values and elements that we have

consistently found in television programs. Nevertheless, given the close ties of many web sites with media-related industries and the phenomenal growth of online video, it seems reasonable to posit that those whose "entertainment" is now tied to computer technology will receive traditional more than nontraditional messages about the world and its people. Given this, it also seems reasonable to posit that the evidence of cultivation will remain largely the same.

Conclusion

Knowledge of cultivation, and the cultivation process itself, are by no means complete. Research continues in many different areas: genre studies, new media, perceived realism, attitudes about crime and violence, marginalized minorities, gender and sexism, politics, or how best to measure and study cultivation. But, even as this area of research has undergone change, it still remains consistent with its roots. Interestingly, research linking cultivation with other theories – such as third-person effects, agenda setting, and the spiral of silence (see Morgan, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2012) – seems to support Morgan and Shanahan's (2010) observation that cultivation may be evolving from a theory to something more akin to a paradigm. Overall, television, although more fragmented and seen on many different types of screens, still remains our storyteller, telling most of the stories to most of the people, most of the time. Consequently, as we continue in the twenty-first century, the relationship between what is seen, the stories that are told, and the way people see the world remains as vital as ever. Gerbner's far-reaching idea of cultivation thus continues to be as relevant today as it was in the early 1970s.

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27

Media Theory and Media Policy
Worlds Apart

Cees J. Hamelink

Introduction

In October 2007 the governments of the USA, the European Union, Switzerland, and Japan announced that they would enter negotiations for an international treaty to set standards for the protection of intellectual property rights. This Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) would in particular address counterfeiting in such new media as the Internet, MP3 players, and mobile telephones. After 11 rounds of negotiations a number of governments have signed the ACTA (among them are the USA, the EU, Australia, Canada, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea). The ACTA is a recent case of international media policymaking. National parliaments and consumer organizations were excluded from the negotiations, which went on behind closed doors. Academics working on theories for the new media were no party either.

It seems very likely – although one cannot be sure, given the secrecy of this policy process – that participants did not use Manuel Castells' theoretical writings on the network society as source materials (see Castells, 1996). Castells has introduced important concepts such as "collective consumption" to refer to services like "public transport," "public housing," and "space of flows" as crucial components of information networks. According to Castells, an important question that global network technology poses is this:

> The Internet networks provide global, free communication that becomes essential for everything. But the infrastructure of the networks can be owned, access to them can be controlled, and their uses can be biased, if not monopolized, by commercial, ideological, and political interests. As the Internet becomes the pervasive

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> infrastructure of our lives, who owns and controls access to this infrastructure becomes an essential battle for freedom. (Castells, 2001, p. 277)

Another challenge identified by Castells is the need "to acquire the intellectual capacity of learning to learn throughout one's whole life, retrieving information that is digitally stored, recombining it, and using it to produce knowledge for whatever purpose we want" (Castells, 2001, p. 278).

It seems very obvious and logical that policymakers would use theoretical observations that were developed in the area of their portfolios. Many policy issues do in fact arise in connection with developments in science and technology and require scientific knowledge to be seriously addressed. In the field of cyber-technology, for example, many complex questions about security and privacy have emerged that need policy measures to be based upon knowledge and understanding of the characteristics and potentialities of this technology. In daily political reality, however, theory makers and policymakers live in worlds apart. Often they are unfamiliar to each other, often they are mutually suspicious, and much of the time they are not engaged in productive exchanges.

The phenomenon of the deficient theory–policy interaction has often been debated in such fields as international relations. Stephen M. Walt, for example, wrote: "Policy makers pay relatively little attention to the vast theoretical literature in international relations and many scholars seem uninterested in doing policy-relevant work" (Walt, 2005, p. 23). And Joseph Nye commented in the *Washington Post* of April 13, 2009: "too often scholars teach theory and methods that are relevant to other academics but not to the majority of the students sitting in the classroom before them." Daniel Drezner (2009) responded to Nye's complaint about the marginalization of academics in international policymaking by pointing out that the policymakers deserve some share of the blame:

> I think that policy makers need to promote a greater appreciation for theory and method that the academy brings to its work and preparing [*sic*] its analysis. What passes for analysis, reasoning, and research in many government briefings is anecdotal analysis, poorly deployed historical analogies, and assertions.

Having worked for some three decades with both academic theoreticians and political policymakers, I reached the view that a similar analysis can be made for the media field. Theories are not always useful and policymakers often lack the interest in and the understanding of theory, so they do not seek advice from academia.

There is little evidence that media policymakers (in the media themselves, or in media politics) base their policy plans upon the theoretical insights that academics have to offer, although there may be a few possible exceptions – for example the use of theoretical insights about media effects for purposes of audience expansion, political persuasion, or commercial marketing and advertising. There is also some evidence of the use of theory in the field of public relations. This field seems,

however, to rely mainly on the use of rather mechanical stimulus–response models that academic research by and large has declared outdated.

The reader will not find a chapter specifically devoted to the theory–policy relation even in a recent *Handbook of Global Media and Communication Policy* (Mansell & Raboy, 2011) – although this book is a "must read" for those interested in the policy field. Some attention is being paid to theory in the Introduction, but mainly insofar as theory inspires research on media and communication policy.

Media Theories

In the field of media studies a wide range of theories has been developed. The most influential record keeper of these theories is Denis McQuail in his textbook on mass communication theory (McQuail, 2000). In this collection we find analytical and normative theoretical approaches to the functioning of media institutions, to the understanding of media contents, to the experiences of media audiences, and to the short-term and long-term effects of the media. There is a multitude of theoretical approaches to assist the understanding of mass communication; these approaches range from theories about agenda setting, framing, and priming to theories from structural, behaviorist, and culturalist traditions (McQuail, 2000, p. 12). According to McQuail, four kinds of theory relevant to mass communication can be distinguished: social science theory, which is a set of ideas about the nature, workings, and effects of mass communication; normative theory, which is a set of ideas about how the media ought to operate if certain social values are to be attained; operational theory, which is a set of ideas assembled and applied by media practitioners in the conduct of their work; and commonsense theory, which is a set of ideas that we all have from our personal experience with the media.

McQuail has proposed a contemporary agenda for mass communication research (2000, pp. 481–482). Its academic significance can easily be demonstrated, but there is no indication that the proposed development of ideas about the network society – the exploration of such notions as freedom and interactivity, of questions about the formation of meaningful social relations, of the actual experience of using new media, and of the responsibility to society – will have even a minimal impact on those who make media policies. It would seem a fair statement, that whatever its shortcomings, the field of media studies has provided its own academic environment with interesting visions that seem to have little if any impact upon the real-world environment. McQuail demonstrates that the mass media are a valid object of scientific theorizing. However, he also notes that media theorizing is

> still very fragmentary and also variable in quality. It often amounts to little more than a posing of many questions plus some empirical generalizations based on a disparate set of observations that are not fully representative of the enormous range of situations where the media are at work. (McQuail, 2000, p. 479)

This does not sound like a summary statement that would inspire policymakers to look for responses to the problems they are expected to resolve.

Related to this "state of the art" is the problem of a serious lack of innovative approaches, which affects not only the field of media theory, but the domain of science in general. There is a common aspiration in the sciences to be innovative and to contribute to new insights. The ideal is that scientists search for and are open to innovative ideas. In reality, however, many scientists are somewhat "neophobe" and rather inclined towards epistemic conservatism. They tend to go for trusted methods of research and accepted theories and concepts. Preferably they look for the confirmation of what they already know. New information is often interpreted in accordance with information already received. Scientists like to claim that they do anything to falsify their initial assumptions, but in practice their preference is verification. This epistemic conservatism is often manifest in modalities of publication and processes of peer review. Peer reviewers often judge work by the less known colleagues and by newcomers with a great deal of skepticism. If an article is based upon a new, unknown, or uncommon method, editors prefer to put it away. The academic establishment is not prone to taking risks. Often submissions for scientific publication from a totally unexpected angle meet such strict demands that the pieces in question will not be published. In case of publication, the reviewer is likely to protect him-/herself by often making many unnecessary remarks and footnotes. A negative review tends to be more highly classified than a positive review.

Policy Issues

It could be argued that policymakers face a set of issues in the media field that might benefit from media theory. Prominent among such policy issues are:

1 *The concentration of media ownership versus pluralism and access for multiple voices in the media* Media theory could help policymakers in the process of understanding how horizontal and vertical forms of concentrated ownership develop and what (political, economic, social) factors are essential in these processes; it could also present persuasive arguments in favor of the democratic need to have a plurality of media inputs in open societies.
2 *The protection of the constitutional value of free speech versus the possible damage of hate speech* Media theory could help us diagnose what hate speech precisely is, what damage it might do, and how it affects the freedom of speech. Media studies could shed light on such questions as who the speaker is, who the intended audience is, what the core of the message is, whether there are alternative voices, and whether the audience is incited to physical or mental violence against a targeted group.
3 *The control of harmful media content (for example in connection with children) and the risks of censorship* Media theory could help people balance societal rights

of protection versus free speech rights and to understand better what censorship precisely implies.

3* *The professional responsibilities of journalists versus their professional autonomy* Media theory could help journalists to reflect critically on the balance between the need to behave as responsible citizens and at the same time operate as independent professionals.

4 *The cultural significance of media in relation to cultural diversity, protection of cultural identity, societal integration, and the role of minorities* Media theory could help in the analysis of the role – presently ill understood – that the media of information and entertainment play in the evolution of multicultural societies.

5 *The protection of citizens against commercial advertising and against commercial and political propaganda* Media theory could help people analyze what various forms of persuasive communication do to the mindsets of media audiences and see how media consumers could develop defense mechanisms.

6 *The protection of intellectual property rights in relation to the aspiration to become a knowledge society* Media theory could help us explore how a regime for the protection of intellectual property can strike a balance between knowledge as a public good that is part of the common heritage of humankind and knowledge as a largely privately owned and market-driven commodity.

7 *The question of how to finance public media* Media theory could help us explore the need of democratic societies to support public media and find new ways of creating private/public partnerships to fund independent, accessible, and high-quality media products.

Obstacles to the theory–policy relationship

If one expects theorists and policymakers to engage in a productive relationship over such issues, we first have to signal that theory and policy – in a general sense – belong to different fields. The theory–policy relation can be seen as a knowledge – political action gap. In the policy analysis literature this gap has been analyzed as reflecting conflicting sets of values, different organizational formats, and a clash of knowledge versus power. Science and politics have often been studied as worlds with their own organizing principles. Among others, Luhmann (1971) has suggested that science is driven by the principle of "truth" and politics is steered by the principle of "power." However, like in the political world, in science, too, there is a competitive struggle for resources, credits, and public attention that certainly involves discursive – communicative, symbolic, and cognitive – modalities of power.

The relationship theory–policy has also been perceived as a producer–client interaction. This is the case when policymakers commission science to undertake research efforts. The research results may then be used, but this often goes unnoticed, as policymakers tend to rewrite or edit results to suit the interests of their world.

Harold Lasswell (1971) wanted to make better-quality information available to policymakers through his media research. Using the best available evidence as the basis for political decision making may sound sensible, but political decision makers are not necessarily interested in this rational approach. Policy processes are not characterized by rationality, but rather by emotional and subjective considerations. Ithiel de Sola Pool (1974) correctly observed that, in the end, media policy is guided by politics and not by academic reflection. And politics is an activity driven by a general or a specific purpose or by a problem that needs to be resolved. In achieving this purpose or in resolving this problem, irrational factors play a great role; such factors are, for instance, the fear of losing face, unwillingness to revise earlier choices, megalomaniac self-perceptions, or the pressure of "group-think." Policymakers have an agenda that is inspired by certain values, and therefore they seek information that suits political decision making. Research may produce usable or nonusable information. For the information to be usable, the researcher needs to operate within the frame defined by the political system. It is, arguably, naïve to expect policymakers to be seriously concerned about the theoretical underpinnings of their proposals. Policies are made in order to achieve certain objectives, and, if a theory lends support to the means applied to reach these objectives, it will be accepted as useful. The theory that does not fulfill this "alibi" function will be discarded. More important, however, is the fact that the expected use of theory by policymakers carries an implicit assumption that they would want to be fully informed. In the practice of political decision making the preference is often for a playing field with not too much information, because this leaves the space for flexibility in manoeuvring conveniently open. Where policymakers may want conclusive answers, they demand too much of the field of science. On many essential questions science is speechless – in the sense that no scientist can tell us, say, how to behave morally. Science has no answers to the fundamental existential questions about the meaning of life and does not resolve our deepest uncertainties and doubts. Science must admit to an ignorance and uncertainty that the policymaker is likely to experience as uselessness. Where policymakers may want strong theoretical and empirical evidence of the manipulative power of the media, academics may want to offer a set of qualifying footnotes that will, at best, lead practitioners and politicians to wonder whether any media policy is needed at all.

An additional problem is that policymaking in the field of the media is very controversial. Media are, typically, a domain where professional autonomy is considered to need no external rules or controls. The mass media – certainly in Western countries – fall under the protection of liberal calls for less state policy and more uncontrolled market. Communication plans and policies have always been more popular in so-called Third World countries. In the1970s, particularly in the United Nations agency UNESCO, a strong movement for the planning of national communication policies emerged. In 1980 the MacBride Commission recommended in its report: "It is essential to develop comprehensive national communication policies linked to overall social, cultural and economic development objectives" (International Commission for the Study of Communication

Problems, 1980, p. 254). The Commission also stated that "every country should develop its communication patterns in accordance with its own conditions, needs and traditions, thus strengthening its integrity, independence and self-reliance" (p. 254).

Among the obstacles on the road to the realization of such statements – in addition to political and economic obstacles – was the paucity of relevant theoretical instruments to address such issues as the function of national communication systems, the organizational structures of such systems, or the rules and mechanisms by which the functioning of such systems could be controlled. This was compounded by the fact that whatever theoretical reflection was available was designed in the colonial metropolis and was itself often the carrier of forms of dependence that national policies were advised to liberate themselves of.[1]

Immediately after World War II there was considerable interest in media-related policy research – understandably so, given the general sentiment of a "makeable" society, the aspiration to create a better world, and the newly available instruments for social science research. Media research developed in what came to be called the administrative, bureaucratic tradition, which largely served dominant political and commercial interests. Its critical counterpart also emerged, but it was not seen by power holders as useful to their interests.

Moreover, it should be questioned whether the available research can provide the best evidence, because the conclusions are usually incomplete, inconclusive, contestable, and they change in the course of time.

Could a policymaker who would carefully study McQuail's (2000) textbook find sufficiently robust media theories to help him or her design solutions for pressing policy issues? Actually, this policymaker may discover that media studies are not very well equipped to find valid answers to policy questions. The field is marred by a dearth of theoretical reflection, and its theoretical approaches are mainly of the empirical–analytical kind.

It should be noted, in all fairness, that, next to this dominant approach, there have always been attempts at more fundamentally critical analyses, inspired by the theorists of the Frankfurt School tradition, by the cultural analysts from the Birmingham School, or by scholars from the political economy tradition – scholars like Dallas Smythe, Herbert Schiller, Nicholas Garnham, Peter Golding, and Graham Murdock; but all these figures offered leads and insights that policymakers were not likely to find to be constructive for public choice making.

The flaw of the prevailing empirical–analytical approach is mainly its attempt to provide a coherent descriptive and predictive account of phenomena. It addresses reality as it is. The limitation of this approach is twofold. The essential contestability of theory in the social sciences renders the explanatory validity of empirical–analytical theories rather poor. As these theories are characteristically *underdetermined*, which means that there are always several theoretical perspectives that concur with the empirical observation of reality, the empirical analysis of data provides no arbitration among divergent theories. More important for the present argument is, however, that empirical–analytical theory cannot address

essential issues, such as what type of political institutions and practices are needed to meet the challenges of the future. The empirical–analytical approach provides little if any meaningful guidance to the choices policymakers face. It does not seriously assist the task of public policymaking in the field of the media.

The lack of productive interaction can therefore partly be blamed on the academics and their failure to produce useful theory. In the early 1980s, when I was at the Institute of Social Studies of The Hague, I initiated with Alan Hancock of UNESCO a series of academic programs in communication policy and planning for development (Hancock, 1978). The theoretical inputs for these programs (carried out in Nairobi, Kenya, with policymakers from the African continent) came mainly from policy studies (systems, game, and public choice theory), technology studies (technology assessment, risk, forecasting, and social constructivism theory), and development studies (theories on economic development, colonialism, liberation, and dependence).

There was little useful theoretical material available on the media of communication for the policies and plans that were supposed to be designed.

The earliest inputs on the role of media in national development (Schramm, 1964) did contain only piece-meal reflections on the media that could hardly be catalogued under the rubric of robust media theory.

When I wrote books on national information and informatics policy (Hamelink, 1983, 1988), the theoretical underpinnings came from studies in cultural anthropology, colonialism, development economics, and policy analysis. Among the essential inspirational sources were Frantz Fanon (1970), Paolo Freire (1972), Dieter Senghaas (1977), E. Schumacher (1973), David Collingridge (1980, 1982), L. Winner (1977), and Aaron Wildavsky (1979).

Academics may have failed to produce sufficiently useful theory for policy and planning, but it would be short-sighted to not also ask the policy field to share part of the blame. The deficient theory–policy encounter is also due to the opportunism, lack of analytical rigor, and often anti-intellectualist hostility of the policymakers. Most studies dedicated to the impact of social research on public policy are rather discouraging. A constant finding is that a good 50 percent of civil servants totally ignore research and some 40 percent, even if hard pressed, find it difficult to point to research they would consider useful. Social scientific research, if used at all, mainly serves to improve bureaucratic efficiency, to delay action, to avoid responsibility; or it functions to discredit opponents, to maintain prestige, or to ask for more research. In fairness it should be recognized, though, that it is not always easy for policymakers to judge the quality of the theoretical expertise offered to them. Science can no longer claim undisputed authority. Cases of fraud, plagiarism, and bonds between academics and industrial interests have raised questions about the role of private interests in such field as biomedical and genetics research. The critical explorations of Sheldon Krimsky (among others) in his project Corrupted Science provide illustrations of how scientific research may be tainted by non-scientific motives (http://www.tufts.edu/~skrimsky).

The conclusion is therefore that the field of theory does not always offer useful material to the policymakers and the policy field is not always interested in the best available evidence. To this one needs to add that in many political arenas knowledge has become so readily available through online search machines that scientists and laypeople often all claim to be experts. Certainly in the media field there is a widespread feeling among media users that they have considerable experiential expertise in matters of media effects.

What theorists could do

For the field of media theory, there is the crucial challenge to assist policymakers in asking the right questions rather than in providing the correct answers. It would be a great achievement if the creation of theory would contribute to the policymaker's understanding that, because of the complexity of the system that he or she deals with, policymaking should be a reiterative or permanent process of reflection and introspection.

For the media theorist, this implies that, instead of the conventional selection of a framework that is then applied to the material to be studied, the method of "grounded" theory should be used, which departs from the available data and their categorization and develops by means of reverse engineering toward a theory that is tested in dialogue with both the subjects and the audiences of the research process (Charmaz, 2006).

Media studies should also give more structural attention, in teaching and research, to the question of how theoretical work can be relevant for policymaking. Media students could learn that policymaking is a very complex and contested process, for the grasping of which assumptions about a linear instrumental relationship between knowledge and decision making are fundamentally flawed. They could learn that the quintessential problem in the relationship between theory and policy is the age-old question of how those who produce knowledge and those who make policies can communicate.[2] They could also learn that the most promising approach is an interactive and cooperative relationship between knowledge makers and policymakers, and that media studies could help to advance a model of reciprocal interaction that may bridge the theory–policy gap.[3]

What policymakers could do

Policymakers could develop the maturity to consult cutting-edge scientific results that are pertinent to their portfolios; and they could also show some willingness and ability to listen to academics. They could learn to distinguish between a difficult but useful and an empty and useless theory. "A better understanding of theory and method … might help policy makers receive the better advice they seek" (Drezner, 2009). Essential is also the intellectual capacity to accept a basic uncertainty that may look like anathema in politics but in fact does enlarge the political space for action and offers a protection against political vulnerability: a protection

that is more effective than the use of the absolutist speech, so abundantly present in politics (Hamelink, 2011, p. 72).

Worlds Apart

Even if a more meaningful relationship could be built, it should be realized that media theorists and media policymakers have different responsibilities. The theorist can be politically engaged but at the same time should be critical and independent. The policymaker needs concrete, applicable responses to concrete and often burning questions.

Policymakers (and most often their constituencies) want simplicity and speed. The media and their interaction with their audiences are complex systems; and the study of complexity needs patience.

In democratic societies scientific knowledge cannot automatically have the authority of policy measures that are imposed on the citizens. It needs to be part of a participatory knowledge creation process, which politicians tend to find burdensome and superfluous. In societies where the polity has become vocal on many issues, it should be realized that, whatever admiration and authority science commands when it speaks about quarks, particles, or black holes, and however magical science parks may be, when it comes to matters where everyone feels to have expertise (like the media of communication), the field is one of controversy and contestation.

Theory and policy are worlds apart! Ironically, this is as it should be. If theory and policy get too close, theory can become too politicized and loose credibility, or policy can become too technocratic and loose legitimacy. They should keep a distance from each other – but also learn to interact in ways beneficial to the society they both serve.

Notes

1 For more reflection on this and a case study, see Hamelink, 1983, pp. 109–122.
2 Ann Majchrzak (1984) discussed this communicative relationship between policy researchers and policymakers.
3 For an illustration from immigration policy in New Zealand, see Blewden, Carrol, and Witten, 2010.

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Part IV

Media Theory and New Technologies

28

The Philosophy of Technology and Communication Systems

Clifford G. Christians

Global media corporations are remapping the planet. Previous geographical alignments organized by political power are being reordered in terms of electronic megasystems. A new information order is taking shape, but within a complicated world of sociopolitical institutions. Computer technologies are promoted for democratization even as cyberwarfare becomes a new strategy for the military. Education is cut back, while consumerism prospers. Journalism, advertising, public relations, and entertainment have depended on sophisticated technology since the days of radio and television; digitalization has put media industries on a new order of magnitude. The upheavals are immense, and they are not taking place in abstraction, outside everyday affairs. DVDs, iPods, online databases, news streaming, Facebook, smart phones, and virtual reality – the electronic highway has become the everyday world of advanced industrial societies.

Political economy and cultural studies give us important perspectives, but the philosophy of technology also has a strategic role to play in our coming to grips with the perplexing issues of globalization. Language is indispensable to our humanness and to the social order; therefore, when our communication capacity is mediated in fundamentally different ways from the ones before, the impact is substantial and far-reaching. Accounting for the social influence of media technologies is a historical and empirical task, but so is, clearly, the philosophy of technology as well. Since technologies are not neutral but value-laden, intellectual work on the character of technology as a whole is necessary for the long term.

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Philosophies of Technology

In Western intellectual history, from classical Greece until today, there are three philosophical approaches to technology: Aristotle's teleology, Marx's materialism, and Heidegger's existentialism. Each is theoretically distinct.

Aristotle's naturalistic tradition becomes positivistic in its modern form. Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics* anchors the Aristotelian legacy since its publication in 1948, and Wiener's infatuation with Bertrand Russell's positivism is well known (for Russell, see Russell & Whitehead, 1910–1913). In positivism, knowledge is gained through facts; and, when factuality is presented in terms of causal explanations, the mechanical test of truth has been provided about reality. Weiner's organic integration of all systems – physiological, hydraulic, electronic – assumes the "point of departure" to be "the electric circuit carrying a continuous current" (Weiner, 1956, p. 26). Positivism directs the technological enterprise to mathematical calculation and to engineering instrumentalism – that is, to a linear model of communication technology.

The critical philosophy of technology initiated by Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Marx, 1964) is rooted in the fundamentally different philosophy of dialectical materialism. This philosophical school, developed by Marx and Engels, insists that the observable world is taken in its own right, mind being an outgrowth of matter and reality requiring no transcendental source. Patterns of change are laws of materialist dialectics, according to which each phase of development by synthesis generates its own contradictions. In its social application as historical materialism, technological change is driven by the material forces and social relations of production. The heart of the issues in media technology is formed by the concepts of industrial organization, ownership and labor, and the production and distribution of programs considered to be commodities. Daniel Schiller (2000), for example, uses these concepts to demonstrate how cyberspace serves the economic interests of the global market system.

Heidegger's philosophy of technology is existentialist. Essence is central to the tradition of Western rationalism, and existentialism totally contradicts essentialism. Instead of attempting to determine a "human nature," existentialism focuses on persons acting, feeling, and living in their concreteness. In Heidegger, existence finds its first systematic philosophical formulation. Drawing inspiration from Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, Heidegger turned philosophy toward the question of what it means to "be-in-the-world." From his early classic *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*), first published in 1927 (Heidegger, 1962/1927) through his last major book of 1958, *What Is Philosophy?* (Heidegger, 1958), the presupposition and preoccupation of his philosophical inquiry was Being. Heidegger described the human being as a *Dasein* (literally meaning "therebeing"), to indicate that intentional existence distinguishes the human species from all other entities. Human beingness is not a static substance, but a situated existent receiving and expressing the significance of things. Technology is the determining feature of human existence in Heidegger's century. With the foundations of the technological enterprise rooted

in human life, his challenge for communication theory is humanocentric: recovering authentic humanness while understanding technology as a totality.

These three philosophies of technology cannot be listed side by side. Marx and Heidegger are in contention with Aristotle's legacy, and Marx's critical approach opposes Heidegger's paradigm, though in lesser terms. "Technology" in the Aristotelian tradition corresponds to, or renders, the Greek *techmē* – a noun usually translated, especially in Aristotle's own works, as "art" (as opposed to "science," *epistēmē*); hence *technai* ("the arts") are understood as artifacts, tools, or products. The Marxist and Heideggerian philosophies of technology, on the other hand, define technology predicatively, as an action, as something you *do* – understood as a cultural activity or process. Technology is not limited to artifacts, but the concept includes practices associated with designing the manufacture and use of technological products. As Arnold Pacey puts it, "technology-practice is the application of scientific and other knowledge to practical tasks by ordered systems that involve people and organizations, living things and machines" (Pacey, 1996, p. 6).

Despite the greater intellectual substance of Marx and Heidegger, the Aristotelian model has dominated research and scholarship in communications historically. For the vitality of media and communication theory in the complicated days ahead, the philosophies of technology rooted in Marx and in Heidegger are the most productive ones. A review of these three paradigms lays the groundwork for applying philosophical theories of technology to communication systems and for assessing that application.

Aristotle's instrumentalism

The traditional concept of what we, today, call technology *as means* originated with Aristotle. "Technology is a human arrangement of technics – tools, machines, instruments, materials, and science – to serve human ends … It is not thought to have any meaning in itself. It is, as commonly said, neutral" (Hood, 1972, p. 347). Technology is not an end, but a means to something else. It is extrinsic to a person's being and to society's character. Its value derives from non-technological goals. What it produces is not necessary or innate. Foxes and trees grow according to their natural form, but through technics we artificially build a glass window pane from minerals. The meaning of technological products is found in the human purposes they serve; in Aristotle's terms, "the end of the medical art is health, that of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of economics wealth" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1, $1094^{a}5$–10).

Of all possible ends, technology serves human life (compare *Metaphysics* 1.1, $981^{b}1$–35; also *Politics* 3.9, $1208^{a}32$). Tools are needed to meet necessities – shelter, clothing, food, and medicine. Only after securing freedom from bodily needs is a technology that goes beyond human survival possible. Musical instruments are for enjoyment, and scientific tools in a chemistry lab expand human knowledge. But, without exception, technical activities and products receive their justification from the uses to which they are put. Technology is one of the lower human actions. Through philosophy, humans come to understand the intelligible order of things.

Because reason, more than anything else, makes the human species distinctive, philosophy is meant to be pursued in its own terms. "Technology is subordinate to practical wisdom," to the moral and intellectual activities "through which humans realize their essence and stabilize society" (Hood, 1972, p. 349; compare *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.6, 1177^{a}20–21).

In Aristotle's framework, ends are important, but they fall outside the domain of technology itself, conceived of as a means to someone else's ends. In this philosophy of technology, today's sophisticated tools should be used for appropriate purposes, but those designing and making technological products will rightly consider technology in mechanical terms. Politicians may conclude that food production rather than military equipment ought to be increased. Educators may contend that electronic technology should be used to improve instruction, rather than for political propaganda or commerce. Public transportation moving the masses to jobs might be emphasized instead of yachts and sports cars for the elite. But such "ought" and "should" and "recommended" are outside the technologist's domain. The neutral view recognizes that a knife in a surgeon's hands saves lives and among criminal gangs it kills, but the choice to use it one way or the other is not the responsibility of this technology's inventor or manufacturer.

The genius Norbert Wiener, inventor of cybernetics and professor of mathematics at the MIT for his entire career, organized the Aristotelian tradition into an intellectually rigorous and sophisticated philosophical system, compatible with the age of electronic technological systems worldwide. For Wiener, instrumentalism compels politicians and social theorists to fret over technology's impact, but engineering efficiency is required in the laboratory. Technology is immersed in, reorders, and extends the natural reality that obeys the second law of thermodynamics, according to which order is the least probable and chaos the most probable. As he describes the nature of electronic technology in his *Cybernetics*:

> The notion of the amount of information attaches itself very naturally to a classical notion in statistical mechanics: that of entropy. Just as the amount of information in a system is a measure of its organization, so the entropy of a system is a measure of its degree of disorganization; the one is simply the negative of the other. (Wiener, 1948, p. 18)

Having thus defined information as the negative logarithm of entropy, Wiener recognized that information commands – and to that extent controls – the world. He invented the concept of feedback; and he saw this mechanism – through either sense organs or photo electric cells – as controlling machines on the basis of actual rather than expected performance. In his *Human Uses of Human Beings* six years later Wiener showed a thoughtful concern about the command–control character of his theory, but in doing so he had to think outside the theory itself (Wiener, 1954). The positivism his theory represented compelled him by its logic to sacrifice in theory what he wished to take back by exhortation and it allowed the Aristotelian

tradition to continue its moralizing rather than developing a philosophy of technology in which ends and means are integrated into the theory itself.

The first guru of computer programming, Joseph Weizenbaum (1976), was ambivalent about artificial intelligence, since its calculating mode excludes non-mathematical factors such as emotion and wisdom. But, given the mechanical character of cybernetic theory, worries over control and human judgment disappear. For Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949), the technology-as-neutral tradition yields, without apology, a transmission view of communication as message bits per second in a channel – or, in mathematical terms, as H = log2N. The mathematical model of media technology inspires our inventions from 60,000 bits per second in telephone wires to 100 billion bits per second in light-based fiber optics. In Buckminster Fuller's 1975 *Synergetics: Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking* and in his 1981 *Critical Path*, data can flow in complementary patterns, following the harmony of nature rather than the contradictions of political ideology or the constraints of human ideology.

Modernization theory is an outworking of the Aristotle–Wiener paradigm, with its disembedded mechanisms and information flows as the centerpiece of international development. In Everett Rogers' (1962) "diffusion of innovations," media technologies distributed to the educated and economic elite open the pathway to improved standards of living for the society as a whole. For Daniel Lerner (1958) and Wilbur Schramm (1964), the superiority of innovative technologies in advanced societies set the standard for raising political and economic development everywhere. Dependency theory discredited the functionalistic, top-down modernization theory as imperialistic and unacceptable for world-systems theory, but on the whole the mechanistic models rooted in Warren and Weaver continue to promote instrumentalism uncritically (Servaes, 2007).

Ithiel de Sola Poole's *Technologies of Freedom* (de Sola Poole, 1984) is considered a *tour de force* in defending technological systems free of political control and in envisioning what we now call "cyberspace." Nicholas Negroponte, the founding director of MIT's Media Lab, wrote a bestseller in the instrumentalist tradition, *Being Digital* (Negroponte, 1985). Henry Jenkins of MIT's Comparative Media Studies Program understands technology in engineering terms in such influential books as his *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2008), as does the Beekman and Beekman longstanding series *Digital Planet: Tomorrow's Technology and You* (2011). What Arnold Pacey (1996) calls the technical aspect becomes an ideology of technicism for them. Ideas have consequences. On the assumption of neutrality, technological culture is instrumentalist. Engineers design a global system using the principle of efficiency, and companies compete for it on the basis of profitability.

The legacy of tools as neutral is a congenial and productive model, but for global media theory this instrumentalist definition of technology is inadequate and unacceptable. The mechanistic understanding of technology promotes virtuosity values. It channels our intellectual energy and financial resources into high technology, into improving the performance of tools. And a narrow definition of

technology advocates the technical fix. Better professions are said to require better tools. Social improvement, civilization's future, and society's problems are gathered around a technological product or tool. Computers are put in schools; they are preferred to making broad changes, including more and better-trained teachers and smaller classes.

But, even if one grants the validity of Aristotle's two-tiered model for the premodern age, how defensible is it now? Since the 1890s, technological development has multiplied so rapidly in industrial societies that little viable space remains for setting limits and a proper direction. In the face of technology's complexity and dominance, in the traditional view, "we are abandoned to a haphazard scattering of goods and evils, of productive and destructive tendencies, and the structure of technology escapes us" (Hood, 1972, p. 352).

The French sociologist Jacques Ellul (1964/1954) demonstrated that in the instrumentalist approach the principle of self-augmentation begins to rule, pushing technology toward greater speed and larger size, marginalizing small-scale activities and taking on a life of its own, no longer subject to human control. Instead of the elementary view in Aristotle that technological products are a means to transtechnological ends, Ellul identifies a process of ever expanding means that finally overwhelm all ideals worthy of human allegiance. He castigates the mindset that articulates the quest for continually improved means to carelessly examined ends. Technology's contemporary manifestations are a culmination of its classical origins in the Greek dualism of means and ends. Pleading for more concern about ends is futile. The instrumentalist worldview must be turned on its head and inside out. A fundamentally different approach to technology is necessary.

Karl Marx's critical theory

Karl Marx (1818–1883) established the critical theory of technology with his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Marx, 1964). After completing his PhD at the University of Jena at the age of 23, he moved to Paris in 1843 and witnessed a strong militant working-class movement. This book is a collection of 10 essays, some complete and a few fragmentary, written between March and August 1844. It represents the philosophical Marx at the age of 26, rooted in Hegel and Feuerbach, more than a decade before the political economic Marx of the 1857–1858 *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* and of the 1867 *Das Kapital*.

Six of the 10 manuscripts center on the working class, on labor. Marx focuses his argument on the British economists Adam Smith (1723–1790) and David Ricardo (1772–1823), who identified labor as the source of wealth instead of anchoring wealth in land or precious metals. But Marx breaches with classical political economy and adopts the viewpoint of the working class. Instead of justifying bourgeois society, he attacks it. He agrees that labor is the source of wealth, but laborers receive only a fraction of it. Marx emphasizes the dehumanization of workers rather than labor calculated in bloodless statistics. His analyses of capitalist society, surplus

value, and the class struggle are beginning to take shape. The economic sphere is considered the decisive one, material conditions being Marx's point of departure.

Within this working-class framework, Marx introduces the concept of alienation and brings it to a maturity assumed by his later work, but not stated with the same completeness. Production in the factory is technology's home in capitalism. It is the choice of capitalists for controlling labor and the most efficient means of producing surplus value. However, instead of factory production serving the working class, laborers are fundamentally estranged through the relations of production. All four levels of alienation are identified: workers are alienated from the product of their labor; from the labor process, which erodes their dignity instead of fulfilling them; from each other, as workers; and from their specific identity as *homines fabri* (Marx, 1964, Essay 4). Private property appears to be the cause of alienated labor, when it is rather a consequence of it (Marx, 1964, Essay 6). A working-class revolt against the alienation of capitalist production is necessary for communism to emerge when private property ceases to exist.

The humanist Marx is not merely arguing against abstract economism, but struggling with the abstract notion of the human that controlled Enlightenment thought. He not only turns Hegel on his head, but attempts to overthrow Western metaphysics by making labor the human essence. The human being is understood as *homo faber*, defined by the use of tools. As Kostas Axelos (1979) contends, technology is the "motor of humankind's development" in Marx. Through tools, one articulates the relationship of the human species to nature and the idea of historical progress – conceived of as a succession of modes of production, from the era of primitive communism without property to the era of private property (slavery, feudalism, capitalism) and to communism, when private property ceases to exist. While historical materialism is defined explicitly in the *Grundrisse*, the concept permeates the 10 essays. Marx's theory of human development through history is a general theory of technological development. Axelos argues that technology–technique are at the roots of Marx's thought from the *1844* manuscripts through *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859.

Andrew Feenberg's *Critical Theory of Technology* introduces several significant correctives in order to insure that the Marxist philosophy of technology is sustainable (Feenberg, 1991; compare Feenberg, 2002). Traditional Marxism asserts that industrial technology requires a socialist administration. Feenberg replaces this thesis by the concept of "ambivalence," where the capitalist ownership of technological production can be co-opted in order to build a socialist society by "realizing its repressed technical potential" (Feenberg, 1991, p. 144). He argues that in the Marxist perspective, since "technology is not a thing in the ordinary sense of the term" but a social practice, it can be seen as "an 'ambivalent' process of development suspended between different possibilities" (p. 14). Instrumental theories represent the dominant view that technologies, as mere neutral tools, have no valuating content and are useful in any social context. In Feenberg's more sophisticated terms, technology can either inculcate certain relations of production or work to reshape relations and instigate change.

In order to "define a horizon of progressive potentialities" (p. 145) for the technological phenomenon, Feenberg introduces a "minimalist Marxism" that shies away from the overdetermination of classical Marxist theory. The traditional thesis in the Marxist philosophy of technology is that "workers' control of industrial society inevitably leads to the socialist transformation of the division of labor and technology" (Feenberg, 1991, p. 30). Feenberg develops a minimalist thesis instead, which claims that industrial technology needs a radically different division of labor. For the minimalist thesis, "[i]t is not necessary to prove that working class rule guarantees a socialist evolution of society" (p. 39). The theory of ambivalence resolves the dilemma of political realism versus utopia by "identifying the raw materials of socialism among the inheritances of capitalism. It asserts the possibility of bootstrapping from capitalism to socialism" (p. 43).

In the more modest minimalist thesis, machines can be redesigned on values other than mere efficiency. In the same way, industrialized society can be reconfigured away from those capitalist values that only perpetuate a systematic industrial technology – and, by extension, the subordination of labor. In Feenberg's minimalist model, industrial society contains a reservoir of unrealized potential, which can be tapped through a different technological and social organization.[1]

Nick Dyer-Witheford (1999) ignores Feenberg's maximum–minimum distinction and argues for a comprehensive Marxist philosophy of technology instead.[2] *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism* expands on the autonomous Marx tradition and uses it as the author's foundation for understanding global information technology. In *Cyber-Marx*, global information constitutes the latest battleground of the historic conflict in capitalism.

Chapter 4 of *Cyber-Marx* (Dyer-Witheford, 1999) introduces autonomist Marxism, largely through the work of the Italian Antonio Negri (Negri, 1989, 1991; compare Cleaver, 2001/1979). For the autonomists, traditional Marxist theory has privileged capitalists over workers by organizing its social theory around modes of production. Instead the autonomists write the history of capitalism as cycles of struggle. They confront the prospect that we are entering a distinctively new era of capitalist development, that is, post-industrialism or post-Fordism. "A salient feature of this phase is generally agreed to be the extensive deployment by capital of information technologies in order to achieve unprecedented levels of workplace automation, global mobility and societal surveillance" (Dyer-Witheford, 1994, p. 85). In that spirit, Dyer-Witheford is committed to constructing alternatives to information capitalism as it currently exists. He joins the autonomist Marxists' search for a "Marx beyond Marx" (Negri, 1991/1984) in order to confront information age capital effectively.

In *Das Kapital*, capital is the dynamic force unfolding by its own inner logic. "The worker figures as passive object ground between the wheels of capital's exploitative machine. Eventually, the immiseration of workers reaches a nadir such that, in a moment of massive reversal, the proletariat revolts" (Dyer-Witheford, 1994, p. 111). This statement has generated a misplaced confidence in the inevitability of revolution. On the other hand, insofar as the "laws" of economic collapse

do not seem to be developing on schedule, the situation "fosters the vision of capital as an invincible juggernaut capable of assimilating every opposition within its one-dimensional order" (p. 111).

Isaac Balbus argues that there are contradictions in Marx's theory of technology: "Marx wavers between a conception of technology under capitalism as inherently repressive and a conception as potentially liberatory, and he never overcomes the opposition between these antithethical conceptions" (Balbus, 1982, p. 129). For Dyer-Witheford, there are irretrievable anarchisms in a Marxist worldview that is now out of step with the global era of smart machines. A few years after Dyer-Witheford himself established, in 1999, what he considered a credible Marxism in *Cyber-Marx*, he and co-writers S. Kline and G. de Peuter expanded it theoretically and practically in *Digital Play: The Interaction of Technology, Culture and Marketing* (Dyer-Witheford, Kline, & de Peuter, 2003), and then a part of the same team did it again in *Games of Empire*: *Global Capitalism and Video Games* (Dyer-Witheford & de Peuter, 2009). *Digital Play* confronts the disputes, contradictions, and management crises that indicate a future not of democratizing world capitalism but of ongoing struggles in the culture industries. *Games of Empire* offers a radical critique of virtual environments as media that exemplify today's hypercapitalist empire, and the book demonstrates that game universes can be constructed that are an inclusive and sustainable alternative.

Sociologist Judy Wajcman (1991, 2004, 2009) of the London School of Economics adds to the critical tradition by including the issue of gender in this discussion. Her technofeminist theory conceives of technology as both a source and the consequence of gender relations (Wajcman, 2004). Gender relations can be thought of as materialized in technology, and masculinity and femininity can in turn be understood as acquiring character and meaning through their embeddedness in working machines. Rather than seeing technology as a neutral force, she turns to feminist theories that demand human agency and political intervention. Her overriding concern is technology imprinted by a patriarchal mind.

For Wajcman, the feminist perspective broadens the concept of technology beyond instrumentalism, to include the cultures and practices involved in their design, manufacture, and use. She shares the Marxist definition of technology as a social practice, which enables her to understand the embedding of gender relations. She does not approach technologies one by one, as artifacts, but emphasizes the forms of knowledge associated with them.

The core concern of Wajcman's socialist feminism is the relationship between women's work and technology.

> Like many of my feminist contemporaries, I came to gender and technology studies from having been immersed in the 1970s Marxist labor process debates about the technology of production. This literature provided a compelling critique of technological determinism, arguing that, far from being an autonomous force, technology itself is crucially affected by the antagonistic class relations of production. (Wajcman, 2009, pp. 4–5)

For Wajcman (1991), research has demonstrated that women's exclusion from technology resulted from the male domination of skilled trades that developed during the Industrial Revolution. Her feminist framework concludes that gender relations are materialized in tools and techniques. Rather than seeing artifacts as value free, she thinks that technology is shaped by men to the exclusion of women.

Wajcman promotes Donna Haraway's feminist analysis for its opening up new possibilities for understanding the way women's lives are intimately intertwined with the technological process (Haraway, 1997). In anticipating what information and communication technologies (ICTs) and biotechnologies might make possible, Haraway elaborates a new feminist agency, different from the existing critical perspectives on the industrial technological order, which tend to portray women as victims of technological change.

Feminism contradicts the idea that technology is the product of rational technical imperatives. Instead, objects and artifacts are part of the social fabric that holds society together. Technology is sociotechnical: a seamless network combining artifacts, people, organizations, cultural meanings, and knowledge. It follows that technological change requires the multilevel process in which technology and society are reconstituted simultaneously.

The work of Feenberg and Wajcman – and of Dyer-Witheford in particular – has given the Marxist tradition credibility as a philosophically legitimate perspective on technology. Jacques Ellul, from his own Marxist perspective, raises a fundamental question about capitalism in this paradigm. For Ellul, the technological phenomenon defines contemporary life decisively. As an explanatory element, he argues, it plays the part of capital in Marx's interpretation of the nineteenth century. Ellul does not mean that technology has the same function as capital, or that the capitalist system is a thing of the past. It still exists; but capital no longer fulfills the role Marx claimed for it. Whereas work produces value for Marx, in extremely technological societies the determining factor is *la technique*. This is the force that now creates value; and it is not peculiar to capitalism. The characters in the struggle for political and economic power have changed.

In his earliest days as a Marxist, Ellul divided society into capitalists and workers, but he claims that the situation at present is completely different: the basic division of society operates at a more abstract level. We now have technological organizations on one side and all humanity on the other – the former driven by necessity and the latter demanding freedom. Ellul concludes that we must read the world in which we live in terms of technology rather than in terms of capitalist structures. The transition to a technological society is for him more fundamental than anything the human race has experienced over the past five thousand years (Ellul, 1989, pp. 134–135). Technology is not merely one more arena for philosophers and sociologists to investigate, but a new foundation for understanding the self, human institutions, and ultimate reality.

Martin Heidegger's existentialism

Martin Heidegger is typically called one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth-century West. As this chapter pointed out from the outset, from his early classic *Being and Time* in 1927 through *What Is Philosophy*, his last major book in 1958, the subject matter of philosophical inquiry was Being. As a student, then a successor of Husserl at the University of Freiburg, Heidegger pursued his existentialist agenda through a phenomenological method.[3] For him, technology was the primary mode of givenness for contemporary culture, and therefore a central arena for coming to grips intellectually with human existence.[4] In contrast to what the instrumentalist conception assumes, humans do not stand outside technology for Heidegger. It is an ontological issue; technology is intertwined with the existential structure of human being. The meaning of technology is known from the way it works in and through the human species.

In Heidegger's existentialism, human beingness differs radically from that of objects or things. Let us recall that he calls the human being a *Dasein* in order to mark intentionality as the distinguishing feature of human existence. Humans alone are the beings to whom all things in the world can reveal themselves as meaningful. Phenomena disclose their is-ness through the human opening. Human beings are "the clearing of Being" (Heidegger, 1962/1927, p. 277). Humans are in the peculiar position of raising the problem of Being through their unique self-consciousness. There is no subject–object dualism in Heidegger; "the disclosure of things and the one to whom they are disclosed are co-original" (Hood, 1972, p. 353). The traditional view reduces technology to products. To return to a distinction I made from start, in Heidegger technology is not a *substance* – that is, it is not kind of entity to be described by a noun (although the word itself is, morphologically, a noun) – but an *action* – in other words the sort of thing to be captured by a verb, the grammatical category of "doing": it is a cultural process in which human existence is established in relation to natural reality. The technological enterprise and human beings stir through one another like a giant food mixer.

Being is not an essence, as Western philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition have traditionally assumed. In fact, only through the phenomenal can being be understood. The electromagnetic spectrum was concealed until radio and television unveiled it. A house reveals something of woodenness, and a ship discloses the character of water (Heidegger, 1977, p. 13). A "ready-to-hand" engagement with actual entities becomes primary and is more definitive than a cognitive struggle over ends or an engineering wizardry with techniques and materials. Thus technology is not mere means or an ensemble of things, but "a mode of revealing, that is, of truth … [It] comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens" (p. 13).

For Heidegger, technology cannot be grasped in its phenomenological dimension alone – that is, in the human activity of producing things with tools. This is the mistaken approach of instrumentalism, and, unless we overcome it, we cannot hope to understand the technological order.

> We are delivered over to technology in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral, for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology. (Heidegger, 1977, p. 4)

To get beyond the traditional conception, we must grasp how humans and technology interact and how technology takes on its character and orientation in such an interaction.

Heidegger asks the philosophical question: "What are the existential conditions that make technology possible?" "Modern technology is not merely human doing." Technology has an ontological structure that "grounds what we take as contemporary technics" (pp. 19–21). The name for this shape of technological truth is, for Heidegger, *Gestell* – typically translated as "enframing." This concept is similar for him to Michael Polanyi's tacit knowledge and Raymond Williams' structures of feeling. Our revealing of technology is always bounded by its horizons. The human response to technology is located and limited. Human action is not self-originating, but guided by a historical outworking of language and concepts that are not under any one person's control. Humans can indeed conceive, fashion, and carry through this or that in one way or another. But humans do not have control over unconcealment itself, in which, at any given time, the real shows itself or withdraws (p. 18).

"Beings or entities thus appear only against, from and within a background or opening, a framework. But the opening or clearing within which they take the shapes they assume, is itself structured" (Ihde, 1979, p. 105). Technology is not an individual invention, but it emerges within the natural and cultural worlds that humans inhabit. Beings are never simply given as such; they come to presence in a definite way, which depends on the total field of revealing, where they are situated. Technology appears within civilizational givens that are taken for granted. In the contemporary age, the disclosure of technology takes place under conditions of scientific and commercial prowess, rationalism, and secularism. Humans in industrial societies today find themselves in a new interpretive situation – a lifeworld of technological texture that stipulates what is true. For Heidegger, in the modern technological era, being is technicized. Thus penetrating the essence or shape of technology becomes a central philosophical concern, if we are to understand the modern era correctly.

One of the civilizational givens in a technological world is our defining the earth as a standing reserve (*Bestand*). Nature is understood in one-dimensional terms, as a field of energy or power that can be captured and stored. "The earth now reveals itself as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 14). We look at forests and see paper products. The river Rhine is a water-power supplier for a hydroelectric plant (p. 16). Only on the margins are there alternative claims, "which, for instance, regard the earth as mother and to which one does not even put a plow" (Ihde, 1979, p. 108). "Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 17). Unrelenting technological development depends on our viewing nature as a storehouse for engineers. The world is on hand for human interaction, and "whatever stands by in the sense of

standing reserve no longer stands over against us as object" (p. 17). This selective way of seeing the world contains a direction or destiny. We shall "call the sending that gathers, that first starts man upon a way of revealing, 'destining.' … Man is endangered by destining. The destining of revealing is as such, in every one of its modes, and therefore necessarily, danger" (pp. 24, 26).

In the technological mode of revealing, we may forget the concealing. We could mistake the part for the whole. The world may appear totally or ultimately as a standing reserve. "Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry" (Heidegger, 1966, p. 50).

> When destining reigns in the mode of enframing, it is the supreme danger … As soon as what is unconcealed … concerns man exclusively as standing reserve, then he comes to the brink of a precipitous fall, that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. (Heidegger, 1977, p. 27)

The danger in revealing, though unnoticed, is the pre-empting of human existence in the technological process. For something "to be," that thing must be material for the self-augmenting technological system.

Global media systems are especially powerful technologies for redefining humanness. For Ellul, this mediated process of enculturation is sociological propaganda, in which commonplaces and conformity bubble up from below, to homogenize rather than inform. Viewers and readers are understood as consumers; private and confidential data become commodities for digital information banks. In genetic engineering, humans are reconfigured as raw material for scientific analysis. We use human resources like a paper cup – throwing them away as soon as the task is finished. In Heidegger's concern with destining, relentlessly and overwhelmingly, the technological process pre-empts nature and human existence for itself.

Heidegger rejects the assumption that human freedom is independent of technological necessity. But he is not a determinist. There is human agency in Heidegger's model – through *poiēsis* and revealing – but without an individualistic subjectivism (1977, p. 13). Only in its essence does Heidegger consider technology dangerous. "The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already afflicted man in his essence" (p. 28). What counts as real has been leveled and reduced. The technological revolution has dazzled us into accepting and practicing "calculative thinking as the only way of thinking" (Heidegger, 1966, p. 56). As a result, our authentic humanness is closed down.

Application to Media and Mass Communication Theory

The philosophy of technology has two primary applications to media and mass communication theory: triadic theories and cultural continuity. In addition to clarifying the underlying issues and to generating vocabulary that improves our

discussion, the philosophy of technology establishes the direction of theory for the future and a norm by which technological progress can be measured.

Triadic mass communication theory

Within the philosophy of technology itself, Marx's materialism and Heidegger's existentialism have achieved legitimacy as alternatives to an intellectually weaker instrumentalism. For Marx and Heidegger to be taken seriously when articulating the relation between media and culture, a triadic theory of communication is necessary. The Aristotelian tradition leads to stimulus–response models and to information systems theory, neither of which is stitched deeply enough into actual human experience to be relevant. Marx's and Heidegger's radical contextualism requires cultural approaches in which "we first produce the world by symbolic work and then take up residence in the world we have produced" (Carey, 1989, p. 30). The phenomenological world humans are said to produce and inhabit anchors the symbolization process without which social relations are impossible.

However, even semiotic theories of communication do not necessarily incorporate the technological dimension of culture into their frame of reference. Ernst Cassirer's (1953–1957, 1996/1923–1929) philosophy of symbolic forms puts our various symbolic universes on a level playing floor; scientific knowledge as a symbolic formation is no longer superior in principle to such symbolic domains as music and religion. But Cassirer's symbolic frontiers do not explicitly account for technological practices. In a dyadic cultural theory of communication such as Cassirer's, the symbolic world within which humans are constituted accounts for the process of meaning making, but without incorporating the physical world explicitly. As Wayne Woodward concludes regarding the semiotic legacy of Charles Peirce, language interconnects sociological aspects of community, but the "constraints of the physical/material/technological environment are essentially omitted from consideration" (Woodward, 1996, p. 158).

Rooting our understanding of media technology in culture is a significant advance, but the rooting itself begs the question whether our cultural approaches account for technology adequately. If our theories of mediation do not reflect Heidegger's or Marx's complexity, they actually reproduce an instrumental approach to technology. In Cornel West's critique of the cultural studies tradition rooted in pragmatism, as represented in this case by Richard Rorty, that tradition.

> only kicks the philosophical props from under liberal bourgeois capitalist societies; it requires no change in our cultural and political practices. What then are the ethical and political consequences of his neopragmatism? On the macrosocial level, there simply are none. (West, 1989, p. 206)

Within the cultural studies tradition there are dialogic constructions that are explicitly triadic, and triadic theories are those endorsed by the Marxist and Heideggerian paradigms. George Herbert Mead, for example,

> situates human symbolic practices within the structures and constraints of the bio-physical environment in which these practices occur … [he does not] resort to separate terminologies to analyze multiple levels of practices and constraints – mind, self, society and bio-physical environment. (Woodward, 1996; cf. Mead, 1934)

In Majid Tehranian's reconstruction of Mead, the world and social reality are symbolically connected through an "established or emerging stock of signals (technology) and knowledge (culture)" (Tehranian, 1991, p. 57). Mead's shared symbolic world directs us away from the production of meaning solely through language and toward "the physical and artifactual constraints within, and by means of which, all communication materially occurs" (Woodward, 1996, p. 160). In Martin Buber's variation, our mode of existence includes both Thou and It in the relational moment.

The medium-oriented Canadian tradition is explicitly triadic also. Originating with Harold Innis (1951, 1952) at the University of Toronto and popularized by his successor Marshall McLuhan (1964), this cultural theory of communication argues that social change results from media transformations, that changes in the symbolic forms alter the structure of consciousness and of society. Instead of ignoring the material, within this triadic paradigm the distinguishing properties of particular media technologies are considered the most productive venue for understanding cultural patterns and human perception.

James Carey is a theorist in the Canadian tradition who took technology seriously. His essay comparing McLuhan and Innis has become the standard critique of Canada's triadic tradition (Carey 1967; 1989, pp. 142–172). The history of the telegraph becomes for him the basis for evaluating electronic media as a whole (Carey, 1989, pp. 201–230). Carey wrote famously of the transmission and ritual theories of communication, rejecting the simplifications of the transmission view rooted in a monologic instrumentalism and advocating a ritual perspective with the triadic orientation of the critical and existentialist philosophies of technology (pp. 13–36).

Especially Heidegger's philosophy of technology is deep and wide enough to contradict dyadic communication theories, in which symbolically negotiated worlds are devoid of material structures. Heidegger challenges cultural theories of the media and mass communication to take technology seriously. But he makes no proposals for getting technology under control so as to make it serve human needs. While keeping theory on the right track, an ontological view of technology does not provide a series of functional steps for theory building. The crisis we face is not a definition of technology reduced to products and means, but a technological understanding of Being. In Heidegger's view, because our beingness is situated today in technological conditions radically opposed to human freedom, there are no oases in which the moral imagination can prosper undisturbed. The best we can manage is an ongoing struggle toward the revealing of a technoculture concealed from our awareness. Given Heidegger's longstanding interest in the philosophy of language (see, e.g., Heidegger, 1971), he believes that, through a revival of human-centered language, we can enrich our technological revealing.

The struggle is, or ought to be, not over technological devices themselves, but over the civilizational givens embedded in our language and institutions, which undergird the technological enterprise. These underlying values, this instrumental worldview, must be revolutionized for our beingness to be redefined in non-technocratic terms.

Cultural continuity

The traditional Aristotelian view that technology is neutral typically focuses on hardware, on tools and mechanical artifacts. Marx and Heidegger find that definition deficient and view technology instead as a human process value-laden throughout. In their perspective, valuing penetrates all technological activity, from the analytical framework used to understand technological issues, through the processes of design and fabrication, to the resulting tools and products. Although valuing is surely involved in the uses to which people put these technological objects, valuing saturates every phase prior to usage as well.

There is no isolated, neutral definition of problems, solutions, and concepts, as if all existed in a presuppositionless vacuum. Instead, technology proceeds out of our whole human experience and is directed by our ultimate commitments. Value loading is embedded in the technologies themselves. It does not only arise as technology interacts with political and social factors – as in as in the teleological mode of thinking, which was absorbed in the West from the Aristotelian tradition – but emerges from the basic fact that technological objects are unique.

Technological tools and products are particular. They combine specific resources – know-how, materials, and energy – into unique entities with their own properties and capabilities. Any technological object therefore embodies decisions to develop one kind of knowledge and not any others, to use certain resources and not others, to use energy in a certain form and quantity and not in any other. There is no purely neutral or technical justification for all these decisions. Instead they arise from conceptions of social order, good stewardship, and justice. Because technology practice is a value-laden enterprise, it should be directed by a norm.

The philosophy of technology in the tradition of Heidegger is of immediate relevance and directs us to the norm of cultural continuity.[5] As our humanness is always situated (*Dasein*), specifically intertwined with the technological process, the supreme value by which to judge technology is the flourishing of the human species. And when humans are understood as cultural beings, the norm of cultural continuity is the most defensible policy for guiding technological systems.

Therefore note the formal criterion for putting this controlling norm into technical language: Technological products are legitimate if and only if they maintain cultural continuity. To be set in a normative direction, this value-laden enterprise that we call technology must comport well with cultural continuity.[6] The viability of historically and geographically constituted peoples ought to be considered non-negotiable. Given culture's centrality to our humanness, its continuity warrants placing primary focus on it.

Historical continuity is the main idea. Historical continuity is necessary to contradict notions of blind evolutionary progress that undervalue continuity altogether. Historical continuity, as the meaning of the norm, is a foil against theories that advocate or assume technological determinism. Also, continuity undercuts the modernization schemes devised by transnational companies or by colonial powers to strengthen their economic status. Oscillation conveys the appropriate image of a dialectic between continuity and discontinuity – the overall pattern being one of cultural formation rather than rejection.

Opposites are at work here: differentiation and integration, centralization and decentralization, the large scale and the small scale, uniformity and pluriformity. And difficult choices must often be made between these opposites. But the prevailing direction is always toward decentralization and pluriformity. Sometimes that results in a break with past practices (discontinuity), but such disruptions are made more gradually and by smaller steps when controlled by continuity as the first principle. The point is to place a democratic decision about the mix in the hands of the people themselves, who speak in their own interest for those technological innovations that most appropriately serve their local cultures.

The Latin Americanist Ivan Illich (1973) uses the felicitous phrase "tools of conviviality" to describe technologies that meet the test of cultural continuity. Convivial technology respects the dignity of human work, needs little specialized training to operate, and is generally accessible. Convivial tools with a human face are interactive and maintain a kind of open-ended conversation with their users. They are responsibly limited, and therefore empowering for the community. Independent media centers, community radio, street theatre, and indigenous newspapers (such as *Indian Country Today*) can provide a competitive media system that honors the norm of cultural continuity. Reports from NGOs, websites, online journalism, smart phones, digital cameras are all in the people's hands, and language can help local cultures gain their own voice and nurture appropriate options for social change. At the fissures in political and economic institutions where some room for wiggling is possible, communities can weave together an alternative media system following the norm of cultural continuity – one that is close to the ground and participatory in character. Such democratized technologies – owned by cooperative councils and having their policy set by members of the community who care to participate – nurture resistance against the technological mystique in the communities that adopt them.

TV Globo has a virtual monopoly in Brazil. But locally owned video cameras provide a convivial alternative; backyard groups use them as a tool for social change. The Metalworkers Union of São Bernardo has developed a training project called Workers' TV. The diffusion of video among union locals gives a voice to audiences outside government control. In Toronto, videos in schools, churches, and community forums are used to help Latin American immigrants settle into a new way of life in Canada. Programs produced and distributed by immigrants themselves encourage the cultural authenticity that is marginalized by the corporate and technological constraints of the traditional media. Another version of the

tools of conviviality is what Clemencia Rodriguez (2001, 2009) calls "citizens' media." These are spontaneous local movements of marginal, less powerful people who, without too much organization, challenge expectations that are part of their everyday life. Because these groups are closer to the suffering of the poor, they create a discourse that delegitimates the dominant political and economic ones. A proliferation of these small movements gradually undermine existing power structures until no one believes them any more.

As a result of foregrounding technology philosophically, the speed, size, and character of technology are important issues for analysis and application. Reordering the size, shape, and speed of technological products is imperative for enabling a critical consciousness to develop. Instrumentalism thrives as big systems. But, instead of our being overawed by the global media giants and of our designing normative models only for the monopolies and for big-brand media, alternative technologies that are close to the ground are of special importance. In addition to cultural continuity being the norm for global media, in local cultures the norm is often put into practice most decisively through community media.

Conclusion

Arnold Pacey argues correctly that, "when worldviews are in conflict, there will be little agreement" about technological products and practice, because we differ on "what kinds of knowledge are relevant and valid." Debates are "between the blind and the deaf – people who perceive different kinds of reality and have no way of discovering how they interconnect" (Pacey, 1996, p. 162). The instrumentalist philosophy of technology assumes a value-free technical rationality, though as a matter of fact it is committed to virtuosity values in which "technical sweetness" – that is, growth and magnitude – is presumed. The overwhelming power of instrumentalism tends to trap media and mass communication theories within its functionalism, making us satisfied in our theorizing with means rather than ends. In a process sometimes called "technological misdirection," technologists valuing virtuosity continue to invent, develop and produce, even though this means organized waste for consumer goods and fragile, inefficient military technology (p. 171). Moreover, the instrumental approach is grounded in beliefs about the world that give it direction and structure – scientific and engineering expertise, the Enlightenment view of progress, and the assumption that natural reality is a resource to be calibrated mathematically (chs. 2–4).

The philosophy of technology works at the level of values, worldviews, and presuppositions. The traditions of Heidegger and Marx challenge the propositions on which instrumentalism rests and the values it puts into practice. In fact a human-centered understanding of technology turns instrumentalism on its head and inside out. The transformation is therefore a "long revolution" – in Raymond Williams' (1961) terms – or a "cultural revolution" – to follow Pacey (1996, ch. 9). When a society's beliefs about the natural world, about expertise,

and about progress are transformed and virtuosity values are replaced by safety and disposability, then technology practice can become fundamentally humanocentric.

We need the humanities to develop the human condition in a technological age that obscures it from view. For a humanistic philosophy of technology, our support of the humanities is indispensable. Education focuses our attention on the values that drive the technological order, calling for a transformation in our commitments to them. And only when these values, these dimensions of the instrumental worldview, are revolutionized will radical changes occur in technological regimes.

Notes

1 David Noble's (1979, 2011) research into the history of machine tools complicates Feenberg's contention that technology can open up unfulfilled potential for labor. Noble concentrates on machine tools and corporate organization in Fordism, which had a specific design and was not inevitable. But science served corporate management, and no "unfulfilled potential for labor" was evident.

2 Carl Mitcham (1994) divides the philosophy of technology into two trajectories: engineering and the humanities. Marx is taken seriously – there is an excursus on the importance of technology in Marxist thought (pp. 78–88). However, Mitcham does not consider Marxism "a substantive philosophy in its own right" (p. 78). Dyer-Witheford's comprehensive application of autonomist Marxism to high-technology capitalism ensures that a Marxist philosophy of technology exists on its own terms alongside the Aristotelian and Heideggerian philosophies.

3 The phenomenological method for approaching technology is developed in detail by Ihde (1983); see especially chapter 8, "Phenomenology and the Later Heidegger," and chapter 3, "The Technological Embodiment of Media."

4 Heidegger's stellar reputation has been sullied by his commitment to German national socialism before and during World War II (see Lyotard, 1995; Wolin, 1993). As rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933–1934 and as a prominent intellectual during the war years, he refused to condemn Nazism; nor did he offer any apology for it before his death in 1976, at the age of 87. While we recognize the importance of his philosophical project for hermeneutics, post-analytical philosophy, critical theory, post-structuralism, and deconstructionism, Otto Pöggler's question is unavoidable: "How do we come to terms with the fact that perhaps the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century was a Fascist?" (Fry, 1993, p. 16). Since Georg Lukács first exposed this grotesque failure, explanations that Heidegger distinguished Nazism as it occurred from the inner truth of national socialism have not been satisfactory. Rockmore (1995, pp. 128–144) at least provides an intellectually plausible account: Heidegger's transpersonal conception of Being differs radically from the democratic subject and therefore tolerates within it an anti-democratic politics.

5 For an elaboration of the concept of cultural continuity, see Christians, 1989.

6 "Comport well" carries with it a creative ambiguity. On the one hand, it asks for a strong relationship, one rooted in cultural continuity. On the other hand, it does not specify this relationship precisely.

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29

Theoretical Perspectives on the Social Construction of Technology

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Attempting to understand the press or mass communication requires some perspective on the relationship between content and the technologies of production, delivery, and apprehension. This does not mean that every theorist has to say something about technology. It does mean, however, that theorists have to understand the basic aspects of any technology that contains the content that they may be more interested in – and how these aspects affect this content. Or, from another perspective, it means that their consideration of the economic, political, cultural, or social dimensions of communication must not naïvely assume that the technologies used by people are irrelevant to how these dimensions develop within a society.

Although many technologies have been examined from a social construction perspective, the most famous statement made on this issue as it pertains to media technologies is Marshall McLuhan's claim that "the medium is the message" (1964, ch. 1). McLuhan's work, along with the work of his mentor Harold Innis and of the American intellectual Lewis Mumford, spawned a kind of theorizing about media that is now known as media ecology theory. But media ecologists are not as concerned about how to interpret the meaning of technology as they are about the social or psychological results of its development. This chapter will examine the former of these issues rather than the latter.

Social construction theorists start from an idealist perspective – that is, that ideation, not the created physical "stuff" of life, including technology, is the most important activity of humankind. Ideation provides the ability to make sense of the world, to employ technology for some purpose. So, for instance, although the automobile was created and manufactured for the purpose of increasing the speed of commerce, to replace the horse, to provide mobility to people, arguably the most

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significant result of the automobile was the creation of suburbs and the place they came to occupy as part of the so-called "American dream." As David Noble explains:

> This social process called technology … does not exist simply for itself, in a world of its own making. It is, rather, but one important aspect of the development of society as a whole. Since those who comprise society are at the same time the human material of which technology is composed, technology must inescapably reflect the contours of that particular social order which has produced and sustained it. (Noble, 1977, p. xxii)

As for media technologies, one early issue with the development of radio in the United States was whether it would develop as a limited number of "superpower" stations (David Sarnoff's vision), *à la* WLW Cincinnati (500,000 watt Medium Wave or AM), or as a much larger number of limited power locally based radio stations. Another, more recent issue has been the assumption that more television channels, and thus more variety, is better than the few national networks that had dominated American TV. The change in the number of channels was made possible by the development of cable and satellite services, and proponents argued that this development would provide more robust democracy by expanding the marketplace of ideas. This vision did not foresee the current situation of highly partisan television (or radio, for that matter) channels such as MSNBC or Fox News, which has eroded the positions of ABC (American Broadcasting Corporation), NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation), and CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) news in American consciousness and resulted in widespread perceptions of biased news coverage. Technological development did not preordain such results, the social construction theorists argue. Rather it was the visions of entrepreneurs, political party leaders, and elites of various stripes that drove the uses of the technology in particular directions.

Why, then, does media technology develop in the way it does? Standard interpretations would suggest the urge to discovery, or the experimental impulse that wonders whether, when a technology is capable of accomplishing one thing, it might be possible to do another. Wires could carry dots and dashes, why not the voice? *Voilà*! The telephone. The "ether" could carry dots and dashes, why not the voice? *Voilà*! Radio telephony. If the voice, why not music? *Voilà*! Radio. And, if music, why not pictures? *Voilà*! Television. And so on, each technology's capability being exploited to create the next big thing. It seems an easy way to understand progress.

But social constructionists argue that there is far more at work here than such easy understandings suggest. They have suggested a variety of impulses or interpretations that have led to the development and deployment of media technologies. All of these interpretations are the result of mindful symbolic constructs.

Harold Adams Innis

Harold Innis was an economic historian. His early work (Innis, 1971/1923) concentrated on the development of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, followed by the study of staple commodities in Canadian economic development (Innis, 1956).

He wrote about the fur trade, then about fishing, in major works, and was active in editing and introducing various volumes on commodity production, writing himself on the mining industry (see Creighton, 1978). Innis's focus on staples led him to consider forest products, too, and this resulted in an interest in paper (including newsprint), which in turn led him to examine the role of newspapers, books, and magazines. When he published his first article on the newspaper in 1942,

> already he had reached the firm conclusion that the press had been an extremely potent influence in economic and social change; and his paper traced the expanding consequences of the main developments in paper-making and printing during the industrial age. But behind the industrial age lay the earlier, pre-industrial periods. Behind the newspaper and the book were the vestiges of other, earlier forms of communication. And behind the civilization of Western Europe and America stretched a procession of older and vanished empires. (Creighton, 1978, p. 112)

Innis himself wrote, in 1950, that it had seemed to him

> that the subject of communication offers possibilities in that it occupies a crucial position in the organization and administration of government and in turn of empires and of Western civilization. But I must confess at this point a bias which has led me to give particular attention to this subject. In studies of Canadian economic history or of the economic history of the French, British, and American empires, I have been influenced by a phenomenon strikingly evident in Canada, which for that reason I have perhaps over-emphasized. Briefly, North America is deeply penetrated by three vast inlets from the Atlantic – the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence, and Hudson Bay, and the rivers of its drainage basin. (Innis, 2007, p. 23)

Innis went on to mention his earlier work on the cod fisheries, the timber trade, the fur trade, and the Canadian Pacific railway. These – along with the gold rush in Western Canada that had caused a rapid increase in settlement, and along with the development and "concentration on agricultural products … precious and base metals and pulp and paper" – had resulted in his sense that staple products for export were the main drivers of Canadian economic development.

> Concentration on the production of staples for export to more highly industrialized areas in Europe and later in the United States had broad implications for the Canadian economic, political, and social structure. Each staple in turn left its stamp, and the shift to new staples invariably produced periods of crises in which adjustments in the old structure were painfully made and a new pattern created in relation to a new staple. (Innis, 2007, p. 24)

On the basis of exploitation of timber (a staple) to create paper, Innis concluded that the industries that arose on the basis of this commodity must have been significant for development. But that development was not merely economic, but political as well. Innis's reading of the development of the British Empire, and then

his reading of it back into other empires and their ability to rule over vast areas, led him to a consideration of the means of empire: "the effective government of large areas depends to a very important extent on the efficiency of communication. The concepts of time and space reflect the significance of media to civilization" (p. 26).

Although Innis's work is better known among media ecology scholars for its insistence on the bias of different means of communication, his position also reflects a concern for the social construction of communications technologies. For instance, after writing about the significance of oral communication, he claimed that "a change in the type of medium implies a change in the type of appraisal [of the significance of media] and hence makes it difficult for one civilization to understand another" (p. 29). In other words, civilizations (societies) interpret their own history and the means of their communication through the social construct of language, which is influenced by the very medium used for interpretation. The meaning and significance of each medium is a matter of the importance attributed to it and of its use within each society. Since, as he argued in 1951, "the bureaucratic development of the Roman Empire and success in solving problems of administration over vast areas were dependent on supplies of papyrus" (Innis, 1951, p. 47), it is a short stretch to conclude that Roman civilization interpreted the use of this medium of writing as a means to extend and consolidate the empire. The construction of culture (the means of interpreting and making sense of experience) depended on the means of communication available for the construction. This is a social construction process.

In Innis's evaluation of the movement from the oral tradition to print, he was intrigued by the significance of this shift to religion, especially Christianity. In his *Idea File* he saw the use of images in the Western church as the rationale for block printing, for "special emphasis on Bible and paper-image worship" (Christians, 1980, p. 123) and as "worship of graven image of printed word" within Protestantism (p. 124). The social construction of graven image had shifted from the stained glass representations of the life of Christ, Old Testament figures and AD era saints (along with the oral rituals of Catholicism) to the image of words on the printed page in vernacular languages. Again, this is a social construction process.

Marshall McLuhan

McLuhan's work is among the best known in media study, so it is not necessary to spend a great deal of time here explaining it. Like Innis, who was one of his mentors, McLuhan is most used within media ecology circles. Nevertheless, his famous claim that technology is an extension of man is itself an example of social construction. This becomes clear in the introduction to his famous *Understanding Media*:

> Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned. Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man – the

> technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society, much as we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 3)

In this claim McLuhan both acknowledged and distanced himself from Innis, concentrating on the psychological aspects of media development as opposed to its repercussions in society. He also provided a social construction paradigm that has influenced media study ever since.

The *mythos* of Media Technology

No single scholar is responsible for the idea that media technology is understood in terms that go beyond its obvious physical properties, although James W. Carey and John J. Quirk (Carey, 1989) perhaps made the term *mythos* part of the conversation about the implications of media technology. They argued that *mythos* was a type of faith. It attributed divine significance to what might otherwise seem merely a means to solve a problem – to light cities, move goods, overcome obstacles to communication over distance. Discussing electricity they wrote:

> Whether the rhetoric of the electronic revolution appears in sacred or secular form, it attributes intrinsically benign and progressive properties to electricity and its applications. It also displays a faith that electricity will exorcise social disorder and environmental disruption, eliminate political conflict and personal alienation, and restore ecological balance and a communion of humans with nature. (Carey, 1989, p. 116)

Carey was deeply influenced by several strands of scholarship in suggesting that media technology was not merely something to be used for political or economic purposes, to speed up communication, or to entertain the masses, but had a deeper social significance that was based on such *mythos*-laden interpretations. He appreciated Ernst Cassirer's focus on the reality created by symbols, George Herbert Mead's meaning through symbol, John Dewey's creation of community and Robert Park's outline of the roll of the press in such community construction, Innis's emphasis on the bias of technology, Lewis Mumford's insistence on the moral requirements of civilization, and McLuhan's redefinition of message as medium. The combination of these influences, along with perspectives from Leo Marx, Kenneth Burke, Hugh Duncan, Henry Adams, and Perry Miller, convinced Carey that technology was not just a physical presence but, more significantly, something of symbolic and moral significance. Thus society was to be understood and appreciated only through community-defined (or socially constructed) symbolic means that would circumscribe its significance and legitimize its uses. Much of this symbolic work would be accomplished in ritual acts adopted and practiced within a society: such acts conferred meaning to the technology and established its moral dimensions.

Technology as an Intellectual Construct

Clifford G. Christians's chapter dealing with philosophical approaches to technology, included in this collection, is concerned with the intellectual construction, or understandings, of technology in three broad categories based on the works of Aristotle, Marx, and Heidegger. Beyond these broad philosophical and theoretical perspectives, however, are several others that are more specific in nature. These would include the role of intellectual constructs that inform the creation and legitimation of modernity or highly technologically oriented societies – constructs such as Jacques Ellul's notion of *la technique* (identified by Christians as emerging from the tradition of Marx) – and the critique of technics by Lewis Mumford (covered in my chapter about his contribution to theory, including his "agreement" with Ellul).

There are other important intellectual constructs as well. One of these is the role of communications media as control mechanisms. The role of the telegraph as a means to assure that trains could avoid collisions on the single-track transcontinental rail system in the US is well known. The use of radio to direct bombers and fighter planes during World War II is equally known. But control is also to be understood more abstractly and broadly than these specific instances indicate. James R. Beninger, for instance, suggests that the most important control technology of the nineteenth century – identified by Max Weber – was bureaucracy. "For a half-century after Weber's initial analysis bureaucracy continued to reign as the single most important technology of the Control Revolution. After World War II, however, generalized control began to shift slowly to computer technology" (Beninger, 1986, p. 6). This shift was facilitated, he argues, by a control revolution already in progress for more than a century, beginning with photography and telegraphy in the 1830s and extending through the development of television – all providing a set of controls over human experience and legitimizing human experience as captured and presented through technology – that would eventually culminate in the microprocessor-controlled electronic system that was the computer. This process, at once technological and organizational, provided the means to centralize social control, reducing the diffusion of earlier eras and providing "purposive influence toward a predetermined goal" (p. 7) – control, or the answer to a prevalent philosophical query of the eighteenth and nineteenth century: "What makes society possible?"

The significance of Beninger's analysis for our purposes is that it places communication in the center of change.

> So central is communication to the process of control that the two have become the joint subject of the modern science of cybernetics, defined by one of its founders [Norbert Wiener] as "the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal." (Beninger, 1986, p. 8)

Even prior to cybernetics, however, was the mathematical theory of communication developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver at Bell Labs to determine the

necessary levels of signal redundancy in electrical transmission in order to assure an understandable transmission (see Shannon & Weaver, 1949). The more efficient a transmission could be made to be (that is, using the least amount of redundancy possible), the more control a transmitter had over the message. Control, to Beninger, was a function of technology, and technology was "any intentional extension of a natural process, that is of the processing of matter, energy, and information that characterizes all living systems" (Beninger, 1986, p. 9).

Beninger knew that defining control in this manner would be a difficult matter to comprehend. Unlike processing energy or matter to create "things," processing information was "epiphenomenal: it derives from the *organization* of the material world on which it is wholly dependent for its existence" (p. 9). Yet it was such organization that provided the means for control. Just as bureaucratization had been a type of organization that could both provide the means to control people's work and to address society's problems, so the organization of information provided the means to control human activities by legitimation, signification, and evaluation. Living systems depended on the flow of information to counter entropy. This flow had to be channeled, its processing managed, and the results of this processing communicated for sustainability and stability within the system to be achieved. Information processing and communication, Beninger claimed, "might be said to define life itself" (p. 10).

If not life itself, at least the fate of the American republic was intertwined with the development of technology, according to John F. Kasson. The struggle to achieve independence was itself inseparable from technology, as far as those conducting that struggle were concerned: "technology emerged as not merely the agent of material progress and prosperity but the defender of liberty and instrument of republican virtue" (Kasson, 1976, p. 8). As industrialization increased following independence, various experiments to provide increased technological applications to industry without the obvious defects of the British factory system were implemented, the most heralded experiment occurring in Massachusetts under the hand of F. C. Lowell. Visitors to his factories in the decades preceding the American Civil War

> emerged awe-stricken by … technological splendor and moral sublimity … Henry Colman, who was later so horrified with industrial conditions in Manchester [England], exclaimed after a tour of Lowell [a company town housing workers] in 1836, "The moral spectacle here presented is in itself beautiful and sublime." (Kasson, 1976, pp. 79–80)

This was not merely the sublimity noticed by Henry Adams at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876, but an engineered sublimity, purposeful and apparently effective in inculcating "republican values" in the working population. It was the application of theory to actual everyday practice.

In a similar vein, Alan Trachtenberg wrote about the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 as a means to complete the vast transportation system of America

that had begun serious development in the 1830s (the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869), finally connecting the populous cities of Manhattan and Brooklyn to the rest of the country by conquering the East River.

> For many Americans in 1883, Brooklyn Bridge proved the nation to be healed of its wounds of civil war and again on its true course: the peaceful mastery of nature. The bridge seemed to embody those forces which had pruned the wild forest and set a city upon a hill. (Trachtenberg, 1979, pp. 8–9)

The many natural obstacles to America's westward expansion, rivers, mountain ranges, vast prairies and deserts, were "serious obstacles to communication. Moreover, the promising landscape raised a political doubt: could the republican principle, hitherto most successful in small nations, survive on so large a scale?" (p. 9). It would be up to technology itself to bind the nation together, and this required symbols of unity and strength – such as the Brooklyn Bridge (see p. 11). John Roebling, who designed the bridge, saw the necessity of developing technology in America as a "moral duty" (Trachtenberg, 1976, p. 58). Technology, especially that which resulted in increased connectivity for commerce and expansion, was intellectually constructed as a moral agent – one that would make one nation of many (*e pluribus unum*), and that would both reflect and encourage development influenced by republican values. The construction of transportation systems across America was to complete, as Roebling put it, "the great flow of civilization" from East to West – even as far as India (Roebling, quoted in Trachtenberg, 1976, p. 76).

The development of technological systems, then, whether they were physical, organizational, or sociological in nature, carried within it certain expectations of value. As Manfred Stanley put it, "the technological world created by human innovative effort reflects human assumptions, values, desires, and aspirations" (Stanley, 1978, p. 8).

Technology and Meaning

Why do some technologies succeed while others fail? This question occupies a central place in an essay by Trevor J. Pinch and Wiebe E. Bijker. Because they want to know what explains the difference, they insist that technology "can be understood as a social construct" (Pinch & Bijker, 1987, p. 25). They examine the early development of the bicycle as an artifact and then suggest that at some point, when the technology is seen to have succeeded (whether or not it has solved the problem it was developed to solve), it achieves "rhetorical closure." And it is advertising, they say, that "can play an important role in shaping the meaning that a social group gives to an artifact" (p. 44). Advertising, "the distinctive institution of American technological culture," was central to imprinting "instrumental values – and with them, the ethos of mass consumption – on the populace.

Advertising agencies … not only sold the products of industrial capitalism but also prompted a way of thinking about industrial technology" (Smith, 1995, p. 13).

Such meaning is fluid and not necessarily identical for all people in a society. My own work on the interpretation of the meaning of developing communications technologies in Canada led me to conclude that various interpretations were made of them, including the obvious – communications technologies would assist Canadians in creating a single consciousness of Canadianness – the mythic – such technologies were messianic in their potential to solve intractable problems (such as resisting absorption by the United States) – and the destructive – providing the means for avaricious corporate interests to subvert the potential of these technologies by creating monopolies for exploitation (Fortner, 1979a, 1979b, 1980a, 1980b).

As Erik Davis's analysis eloquently demonstrates (2004), the tendency within at least the American and British cases – if not Western cultures *in toto* – is to imagine the development of communications technologies as the means to solve problems in an efficient way. The problem: conflict – the solution: understanding through communication. The problem: scheduling railroad shipments – the solution: telegraphic connection. The problem: the concentration of cultural resources – the solution: the development of radio. These are instrumental interpretations of the value of such technologies. The perhaps inevitable result of such thinking was Claude Shannon's information theory (Davis, 2004, pp. 97–98). And, although various interpretations of the "technological sublime" also accompanied each medium of communication as it developed, such "perceptions are then routinized, commercialized, exploited, and swallowed up into business as usual" (p. 83). Eventually, then,

> Shannon's nuts-and-bolts picture of signal and noise, sender and receiver, started shaping the culture at large. The paradigm of information began to invade humanist discourses, promising to efficiently clean up all sorts of messy problems concerning communication, learning, thought, and social behavior – all of which could now be seen as depending on more or less efficient systems of information processing. (Davis, 2004, p. 101)

Such utilitarian understandings of media and the information it carried could not account for one significant aspect of the process of delivery (or arrival). This was meaning.

> Though the attempt to reconceive meaning under the abstract sign of information is vital for the technology of communication, the absolute dominance of the information model may well exact a withering cost. Information theory is fine and good if you are talking about radio transponders, telephone lines, and drive-through kiosks at Taco Bell, but its universal application saps the marrow from the rich lifeworld of meanings that humans actually inhabit … (Davis, 2004, p. 101)

The issue of the meaning of technology, and in this case media technology, has been subject to several perspectives on the question of neutrality/determinism.

There are at least four distinct perspectives on this issue. First are the "neutrals," those who – as Clifford Christians puts it in one chapter in this volume – follow the Aristotelian tradition and see media technologies as neutral conduits. On the determinist side are both "hard" and "soft" determinists. Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis are often considered hard determinists, McLuhan because of the aphorism quoted earlier and Innis because of his insistence that the media have biases toward time or space. Somewhat softer in approach are more recent media ecologists such as Neil Postman and Paul Levinson. Although Levinson is deeply influenced by McLuhan (see particularly Levinson, 1999), he rejects any doctrine of "total determinism" in favor of "soft determinism," which

> entails an interplay between the information technology making something possible, and human beings turning that possibility into a reality. Human choice – the capacity for rational, deliberate decision and planning regarding media – is an ever-present factor in our consideration of the impact of media. (Levinson, 1997, pp. 5, 6)

And he disagrees, too, with Postman, who, he says, claims that electronic media are incompatible with rational discourse (p. xv).

The fourth perspective is what Andrew Feenberg has called "critical theory." This concept has had much written under its rubric, however, so it is useful first to define what Feenberg means. He intends to chart "a difficult course between resignation and utopia" when it comes to technology (Feenberg, 1991, p. 13). He wants a redesign of technology "to adapt it to the needs of a freer society," one that is not subject to "the illusion of state-sponsored civilizational change" and also crosses "the enormous cultural barrier that separates the heritage of the radical intelligentsia from the contemporary world of technical expertise" (p. 13).

Feenberg does credit Lukáks and the Frankfurt School for taking some steps in the direction he proposes (p. 13). But he also says that such efforts have stopped short of explaining the relationship of technology to nature, arguing that technology is neither neutral nor autonomous (p. 14). Neither is it fatalistic, as Feenberg claims both Ellul and Heidegger to be. However, Feenberg does see that technology is rational – although more in the political sense, a sense that recognizes that "the values and interests of ruling classes and elites are installed in the very design of rational procedures and machines even before these are assigned a goal." He calls technology a "scene of struggle," where the single developed industrial civilization subverts and homogenizes every difference among societies, crushing traditional values and obliterating geography (p. 15).

His solution is to argue "that the existing society contains the suppressed potentiality for a *coherent civilizational alternative* based on a system of mutually supporting transformations of social institutions, culture, and technology" (p. 18). In practical terms, what this means in the social construction of technology is that, as one example, the computer is both good and bad. "By this I mean not merely that computers can be used for good or evil purposes, but that they can evolve into very different technologies in the framework of strategies of domination or

democratization" (p. 91). Because the development of computer technology has been used "to extend managerial power" (p. 93), it has so far failed to reach its democratic potential. And the promise of a new development in computing, artificial intelligence, Feenberg argues, has led only to myths – that the computer is a model of the mind and that mankind itself is nothing more than "the model of his [man's] automata" (p. 97). His conclusion:

> The popularity of these metaphors [that identify human beings with machines] is disturbing: if computers are the very image of humans, then the mechanical world forms a closed system in which we are no more nor less than a working part. The technological obsolescence of humankind has never been closer to achievement. (Feenberg, 1991, p. 98)

People will never understand the computer technologies developed in the absence of culture. As Feenberg puts it, "[t]he critical theory of technology must … include a cultural dimension" (p. 108). This cultural dimension recognizes that not all interpretations of technology are equal: power is engaged, power from ordinary people or from controlling "managerial ideology" that "distort[s] technical development for political purposes" (p. 109) – that is, for the exercise of power of some over others. The implication here is that, as technology is socially constructed, so humanity is (or can be, under elite control) technologically constructed.

It might be easy to dismiss Freeberg's critical theory as old hat, given the changes that have occurred over the twenty years since he proposed it. This might be especially true in the advent of Web 2.0. But it is not so simple. Jaron Lanier, one of the principal architects of "our current digital reality," now "wants to subvert the 'hive mind,' as the web world's been called, before it engulfs us all, destroys discourse, economic stability, the dignity of personhood and leads to 'social catastrophe'" (Rosenbaum, 2013, p. 24). Lanier himself says: "It is impossible to work with information technology without also engaging in social engineering" (Lanier, 2010, p. 4). Lanier provides the example of the Turing test to demonstrate how people both socially construct technology and then allow technology to construct their humanity. This test, he says, "is usually presented to support the idea that machines can attain whatever quality it is that gives people consciousness" (p. 31). After all, if a machine fooled you into believing it was conscious, it would be bigoted for you to claim it was not." The problem is that

> You can't tell if a machine has gotten smarter or if you've just lowered your own standards of intelligence to such a degree that the machine seems smart. If you can have a conversation with a stimulated person presented by an AI program, can you tell how far you've let your sense of personhood degrade in order to make the illusion work for you? (Lanier, 2010, p. 32)

Or another example of how social construction works.

> An impenetrable tone deafness rules Silicon Valley when it comes to the idea of authorship. This was as clear as ever when John Updike and Kevin Kelley exchanged words on the question of authorship in 2006. Kelley suggested that it was not just a good thing, but a "moral imperative" that all the world's books would soon become effectively "one book" once they were scanned, searchable, and remixable in the universal computational cloud. (Lanier, 2010, p. 46)

Updike disagreed, arguing "the importance of enshrining the edges between individual authors." The process of creating one book is, of course, underway. But, Lanier says,

> What happens next is what's important. If the books in the cloud are accessed via user interfaces that encourage mashups of fragments that obscure the context and authorship of each fragment, there will only be one book. This is what happens today with a lot of content; often you don't know where a quoted fragment from a news story came from, who wrote the comment, or who shot the video. A continuation of the present trend will make us like various medieval religious empires, or like North Korea, a society with a single book … Authorship – the very idea of the individual point of view – is not a priority of the new ideology. (Lanier, 2010, pp. 46–47)

The effort by Google to scan all the books ever printed to put them in the cloud socially reconstructs the idea (or technology) of the book. It is no longer an expression of an author telling a story or arguing a perspective. It becomes merely an enormous collection of unattributed fragments of wisdom gathered by an indexing system – a search engine – on the basis of the words employed, not of passions or contextualized experience replete with nuance designed to bring people to a place (physical, mythical, philosophical) where they might learn from a master, a narrator, or a scholar. This activity – along with several others, such as the widespread practice of using avatars and anonymity to post messages, the appropriation of the work of others without compensation, the monetization of identity for the purpose of selling advertising – has contributed to "the digital barbarism [Lanier] regrets he helped create" (Rosenbaum, 2013, p. 28).

This interface between the people who use technologies and the technologies themselves is what leads to the social construction process. An individual might have a particular response to a specific technology – "it's not user friendly" or "I can't figure it out" – but it is the collective experience of society that will likely determine the alterations made to a technology, additions to its capabilities, redesigns of its form or interface. Such collective responses eventually determine the technology's meaning. The success of the iPod perhaps contributed to the minimalist design of the iPhone and then of the iPad, all based on similar touchscreen capabilities, which were somehow interpreted to be easier or cooler than buttons or other physical control mechanisms. Such technologies "fit" because they were not perceived to have any obvious downsides. As William Barrett explains,

> The danger [of losing our freedom to escape from the technical world we create] shows in the superficiality of our complaints against the technical world. We rail at technology when it gets too noisy, pollutes our air, or is about to drive a new superhighway through our living room. For the rest, we are content to consume its products unquestioningly. So long as we can negotiate the triumph of technology successfully, we are unconcerned to ask what the presuppositions of this technical world are and how they bind us into its framework. Already these presuppositions are so much the invisible medium of our actual life that we have become unconscious of them. We may eventually become so enclosed in them that we cannot even imagine any other way of thought but technical thinking. (Barrett, 1978, p. 201)

So, as just one example, while the iPhenomenon has generated so much good press that even its inadequacies are overlooked, it has also convinced people that it is necessary for the control of the infrastructure and ecosystem (iTunes) to preserve the coolness and prevent the dangers posed by the fragmentation of Google's Android platform or the multiple versions of Windows OS. Even Apple's decision to change the connector on the iPhone 5 that rendered all previously purchased peripherals obsolete (some estimated half-billion of them) and not to adopt the increasingly standard micro-USB port elicited little negative commentary.

The Inevitability of Technology

Barrett's interpretation of the meaning of technology (his construction of it) is that in our "present historical existence" it would be foolish to be against technology, for "we should have to be against ourselves." We are completely dependent on technology for

> our barest necessities. More than this, our modes of communication and expression take place within the framework and are increasingly shaped by it. It lays down the horizon within which our human future has to be planned. Almost invisibly it becomes our mode of Being in this historical epoch. The question looms whether we shall shortly be able to see around it or through it or to grasp any other mode of Being. (Barrett, 1978, p. 208)

We socially construct the significance of our Being (using Heidegger's term) using the very technologies that we are attempting to understand. Our thinking is channeled by them; they are inescapable, and to understand their meaning means to interpret it within the confines that they establish. Quoting Norbert Wiener in the 1940s, Barrett repeats (and endorses) his "very simple and unambiguous statement that still hangs over our heads: 'We have modified our environment so radically that we must now modify ourselves in order to exist in this new environment'" (Barrett, 1978, p. 210).

As some scholars think about social construction, it is almost an unconscious process. Technologies are introduced into society along with promises made about the value they offer or the image that comes from adopting and using them, and

people accept them for various reasons that may be unique or collective. Over time the adopters come to some common, although not necessarily identical, interpretations that form the socially constructed meaning of the device. On a more abstract and general level, what the continuous development of technology within a social context means is a societal acceptance of the value of technology per se to life itself. This is technology as a means to acquire and maintain standards of living or definitions of personhood within society. People look for new technologies to solve problems, enhance their own lives, make society more livable, and so on. This is what Jacques Ellul referred to as *la technique*, an uncritical acceptance of the role of technology in human life because of its perceived value even in the absence of demonstrable positive results (see Ellul, 1964, p. xxv). "The ideal for which technique strives is the mechanization of everything it encounters" (p. 12).[1] Ellul claims: "The social or individual consciousness today is formed directly by the presence of technology, by man's immersion in that environment, without the mediation of thought for which technology would only be an object, without the mediation of culture" (Ellul, 1980, p. 38). This environment is a totalizing environment, over time driving out all other "bonds that man has patiently fashioned – poetic, magic, mythical, symbolic" (p. 35). And this environment, according to Ellul, "forces us to consider everything a technological problem and, at the same time, to lock ourselves up in, enclose ourselves in, an environment that has become a system" (p. 48). So, whatever interpretations (social constructions) people make, they occur within a technological system that delimits the possibilities for alternative views, having driven out all other interpretations other than, perhaps, the Luddite possibility. And even this limited eighteenth-century critique of the early industrial revolution has come to be seen as a more global rejection of all technology, but not the system itself.

Of course, some social constructions of technology emerge from particular ideological orientations. And, as Alvin W. Gouldner explains, these orientations are themselves shaped by modern science, the prestige of technology, new modes of production, and the development of publics who were amenable to scientific explanations as alternatives to the top-down, "authority-referencing discourse" of an earlier age (Gouldner, 1976, p. 7). Such "ideologies weaken traditional structures by refocusing the vision of everyday life and, specifically, by calling to mind things that are not in normal evidence," such as class, nation, or free market – seen through the lenses of socialism, nationalism and liberalism (p. 24). So ideology, Gouldner says, "functions as an epistemology of everyday life" (p. 36). This is what provides ideology's power insofar as technology is concerned. The focus on understanding everyday life occurs through a lens. When this lens is itself defined by the technology that people are trying to see through to understand the technology, self-fulfilling prophecies are created: technique cannot delegitimize itself and seeing any technology through the lens of technique will necessarily lead to its acceptance and value. So ideology is both "false consciousness and rational discourse" (p. 38).

Still another type of social construction is that which connects interpretations of technology with those applied to the natural world. In other words, technologies

become such an intrinsic part of the landscape, such an immutable presence in everyday life, that they are seen in the same terms as the enormity, power, and beauty of nature itself. Such interpretations reference technology as sublime.

The idea of the sublime can be traced to the first century AD to the writings of Longinus. More modern interpretations of the sublime drew on Longinus' notion and applied it to the "vast objects of Nature – mountains and oceans, stars, and cosmic space – all reflecting the glory of Diety" (Marjorie Hope Nicolson, quoted by Nye, 1994, p. 2). But this more narrow sense of the sublime, focused on nature, began to be applied to the results of the Industrial Revolution after its beginnings in the 1770s in England. By the nineteenth century interpretations of the sublime began to reach large audiences in Europe and America (Nye, 1994, p. 3). "The reemergence of the sublime was part of a positive revaluation of the natural world that by the eighteenth century had become a potential source of inspiration and education" (p. 6).

The application of sublimity to natural objects such as the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls would seem to imply difficulty in applying it to constructed objects such as bridges, skyscrapers, and the like, because they are experienced (at least by those living in proximity) on a daily basis. But this was not the case. Truly experiencing the sublime, writers argued, required "prolonged reexperiencing. Indeed, even an 'innocent observer' can only be certain of an object's sublimity by continually reexperiencing it to see if it gains rather than loses force through deeper acquaintance" (Nye, 1994, p. 15). This particularly gave industrial objects an edge even over nature, for a steam engine, a bridge span, or a dam could be reproduced again and again so that people would encounter them in different contexts and re-wonder again and again as they came to understand their terrible power – their awe-inspiring quality that provided the sublime experience. And one did not question the sublime – whether natural or manufactured.

Nye provides several examples of the application of the sublime to industrial products in the United States, including the railroad, bridges and skyscrapers, factories, the atomic bomb, and space travel. I will but provide one example here – that of the "electrical sublime." As Nye explained:

> Dramatic lighting made possible the revisualization of landscapes, filling them with new meanings and possibilities. It took the technological sublime in a new direction, displacing attention from particular machines or man-made structures to a set of visual effects. Between 1800 and 1915 electrical engineers found ways to re-present virtually any object with light, so that cultural meanings could be altered as the object was written upon, edited, highlighted, or blacked out. (Nye, 1994, p. 145)

One place where Americans could experience the electrical sublime was at various expositions held in different cities around the country. The spectacular electrical effects constructed for such world's fairs

> announced the emergence of a new form of sublime that may be understood as an extension of [Edmund] Burke's aesthetic … The dramatic lighting in Chicago and

> Buffalo relied in good part on … sudden transitions [from dark to light], and in 1904 the St. Louis World's Fair introduced a new technique by which lightning was made to flash out from a central point across the fairgrounds, moving like lightning on the man-made horizon. (Nye, 1994, p. 151)

After Edison's incandescent electric light (demonstrated in 1879) made these spectacles possible, his company, the Edison Electric Light Co., which eventually became General Electric, began to manufacture lighting equipment in 1881 and installed its first street lighting in Manhattan in 1882. This led to the construction of "white ways" in various cities around America, as people saw how such illumination could change the dynamic of city life and businesses saw the potential to promote themselves through electric signage and could expand their business hours.[2]

The conquering of darkness by electric light demonstrated its sublimity – what awe was inspired by a technology that could change the created order itself! This was an even more stunning spectacle than the development of the telegraph in 1840s, based on the use of electrical current, that conquered space and thus eliminated distance.

Notes

1 Ellul (1964, p. 43) explains technique as follows: Technique involves the systematization, unification, and clarification of everything. "From this point of view, it might be said that technique is the translation into action of man's concern to master things by means of reason, to account for what is subconscious, make quantitative what is qualitative, make clear and precise the outlines of nature, take hold of chaos and put order into it."

2 Edison's direct current- (DC-)based electrical light system was threatened by George Westinghouse's development of alternating current. Edison tried to argue for the inherent safety of his DC system, even pointing out that Westinghouse's system was used to power "Old Sparky," the New York State corrections' systems electric chair. But he eventually lost this argument and alternating current (AC) became the standard for electrical systems around the world.

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Dangerous Liaisons
Media Gaming and Violence

Ran Wei and Brett A. Borton

Introduction

The video gaming industry is a globally dominating enterprise. Sales of video games and accessories worldwide reached nearly $50 billion in 2010, an economic success fueled by increased broadband access and computer literacy, as well as by a pent-up demand for the technological enhancements and next-generation features being incorporated into gaming hardware and software. In the United States, $25.1 billion was spent on game content, hardware, and accessories in 2010 (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2011), an increase of nearly 360 percent since 2005 (Smith, 2006; Vorderer, Bryant, Pieper, & Weber, 2006). The real annual growth rate of the US computer and video game software industry was 10.6 percent for the period 2005–2009, while real growth for the US economy as a whole during the same period was just 1.4 percent (Siwek, 2010).

Despite the immense worldwide popularity of video games and the industry's impact on the global economy, we know surprisingly little about the motives, uses, and consequences of video game play, especially from a long-term perspective. The study of video games is relatively new to the field of media effects research. This chapter provides an overview of video game research from a social scientific perspective and addresses questions that range from the fundamental (what video games people play the most and why) to the more controversial (what effects video games have on the people who play them). More specifically, we intend to offer a critical review of the current research concerning perhaps the most contentious issue related to the video game industry: the association between violent video games and aggressive, violent behavior. Evidence from current video game research literature that both supports and refutes the claimed association will be reviewed.

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Over the past two decades, video game content has become widely scrutinized due to the graphically intense and violent nature of top-selling games (Sherry, 2006). Isolated but deadly school shootings in Kentucky, Arkansas, and Colorado raised concerns over video game-induced violence; critics claimed that video games with violent or aggressive themes can adversely affect a player's behavior to the point of triggering violent or anti-social behavior (Anderson, 2004). Violent video games are becoming more extreme for a variety of reasons, driven as they are by the desires and demands of players and the staggering economic growth of the industry (Miller, 2010). If the trend toward more graphic and extreme content continues to hold in the future, video games could have far greater implications for user behavior. Can we expect more extreme game violence to lead to more seriously violent behavior? More importantly, how can we theorize the effects as a means of generating consensus about the impact of violent video games?

Researchers have attempted to document consistent scientific evidence that links violent video games and overly aggressive, dangerous behavior from players since the mid-1980s. Some researchers, however, have challenged findings that suggest a linkage between violent video games and dangerous anti-social behavior. In fact scholars have argued that aggressive content in video games can allow players to release anger and stress in a non-destructive way (Bowman & Rotter, 1983; Kestenbaum & Weinstein, 1985), essentially by using the games to channel anger and, ultimately, find relaxation. What scholars tend to agree on is that existing research has yet to answer fully the questions about violent video game effects. Contemporary research, particularly the work being done by René Weber, expands upon the cognitive and emotional effects of new media platforms, including the latest generation of video games, by applying both traditional social scientific and neuroscientific methodology. This work, as well as existing scholarship on the behavioral effects of violent video games, will be further reviewed in this chapter.

Finally, we will also consider the prospect of regulatory action on video game content, from within the industry or through more stringent governmental restrictions. As the popularity of video gaming has soared, the industry has successfully defended itself against efforts to regulate sales of games to minors. To date, the courts have been opposed to such legislative sanctions, citing First Amendment concerns as well as a lack of evidence for a causal relationship between video games and violent behavior. For example, in June 2011, the US Supreme Court ruled that a California state law banning the sale of violent video games to minors was an unconstitutional imposition on freedom of speech (Liptak, 2011).

As sales of video game hardware and software continue to grow around the world, research on the motivations and effects of gaming remains highly relevant and critically important to the field of media effects. This chapter offers a comprehensive and critical analysis of (1) video gaming as a cultural phenomenon; (2) the scientific literature that has addressed violent video games and their effects; and (3) the efforts by social scientists to gain a deeper understanding of gaming, its extraordinary global allure, and its potentially problematic outcomes. Directions for future research are also suggested.

A Brief History of Video Games

The evolution of modern video gaming began in the 1960s; the first game consoles began appearing in commercial establishments in the early 1970s. The video game industry soared during the 1970s and 1980s with the invention of the portable data cartridge, which led to unprecedented innovation in hardware platforms. Handheld video games were first produced in 1978 but didn't catch on with mass audiences until Nintendo's Game Boy platform debuted in 1989.

Perhaps the most significant driver of video game popularity is the continued development of powerful hardware systems, capable of running increasingly sophisticated software and of making video games more graphically detailed and realistic. The established leaders in game system innovation have also successfully carved out niches in the market to further enhance their dominance. Sony (PlayStation) and Microsoft (Xbox) battle for market share by targeting older age groups, while Nintendo (DS and Wii) developed a counter-strategy by specializing in family-oriented and children's games.

The adoption of personal computers in American households in the late 1980s helped fuel the popularity of PCs as a gaming platform (Dreier, 2006). Technological advances in handheld platforms have helped drive the popularity of gaming on mobile video players. Data from the Entertainment Software Association (ESA, 2011) indicate that 72 percent of American households play computer or video games, and 55 percent of gamers play games on their smart phones or handheld devices.

Types and Content of Video Games

Like music, video games are categorized by genres that define the parameters of the game's theme and content (Sherry, 2006). While genres range from nonviolent (e.g., puzzle or card games, educational games) to predominately violent (e.g., shooters, fighters, kung-fu action), games in most genres often feature a mixture of nonviolent and violent content. For example, racing games tend to focus on skills necessary for high-performance automobile racing (*Need for Speed*, *Gran Turismo*), but one of the first video games to spark controversy for its violent content was the 1976 racing game *Death Race*, in which pedestrian "gremlins" were run over for points and replaced onscreen by tombstones. Subsequent racing games awarded points for running over pedestrians (e.g., *Carmageddon*) or allowed players to shoot each other (e.g., *Crash Team Racing*).

There are thousands of popular educational, nonviolent strategy, and sports games currently on the market. According to ESA (2011), 76 percent of all games sold in 2010 were rated "E" for "Everyone," "T" for "Teen," or "E10+" for "Everyone 10+." However, violent video games remain the highest selling and most heavily marketed of all genres. The largest single sales categories in gaming in 2010 were action or "shooter" games, accounting for 32 percent of all sales (Morris, 2010).

Violent video games came of age in the 1990s, thanks in large part to 1992's *Mortal Kombat*. The game's digitized graphics brought gory realism to a new level – including severed heads, and hearts and spines freshly ripped from victim's bodies. It has been one of the highest selling video games ever since (Gross, 2011). It also led to the creation of the Entertainment Software Rating Board, an industry oversight group that assigns computer and video game ratings based upon a game's age-appropriateness and content. Yet, despite the implementation of the rating system, violent video games continued to grow in number and popularity. Top-selling titles such as *Street Fighter* and *Doom* featured highly advanced graphics (e.g., blood) and sound (e.g., screams) while challenging players to maim, wound, or kill opponents.

Most recent data released by the NPD (formerly known as National Purchase Diary) Group, a market research firm specializing in consumer and research trends, show that action games (21.7 percent) and shooter games (16.9 percent) were two of the three most popular genres in 2010 in terms of total units sold worldwide. Violent content games with ratings of "M" for "Mature" accounted for nearly a quarter of total unit sales in 2010, and five of the top 10 best-selling video games in 2010 were rated "M" for violent content (ESA, 2011).

From Violent Media to Violent Video Games: Evolution of the Field

In the field of media effects research, potential harmful effects of mediated violence (such as TV and film violence) have been scrutinized for more than six decades. Video game violence is the new kid on the block, having emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Thus there are fewer empirical studies on video game violence than on TV and film violence (Anderson et al., 2010).

Early content analyses measured the amount of violent content in games, sampling various titles in each rating category established by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB). A content analysis of video game magazine articles released before and after the establishment of the ESRB ratings found that violent content increased and became significantly more extreme in 2004 (Miller, 2010). Another study used a coding scheme from the National Television Violence Survey to examine the 60 most popular games across three platforms: Sony PlayStation, Nintendo N64, and Sega Dreamcast.

Past studies estimate that the proportion of games that contain violence ranges from 56 to 98 percent, depending on the sample (Children Now, 2001; Haninger & Thompson, 2004; Scharrer, 2004; Smith, Lachlan, & Tamborini, 2003; Thompson & Haninger, 2001). For example, 98 percent of games rated for "Teens" contained violence (Haninger & Thompson, 2004). A study of games from 1988 to 2005 found that many forms of violence increased over time; violence became more frequent, realistic, and extreme (Miller, 2009). In terms of physical aggression in games, Thompson and Haninger (2001; see also

Haninger & Thompson, 2004) found that one third of the play in violent video games rated either "T" for "Teens" or "E" for "Everyone" featured physical aggression. Smith et al. (2003) found that games rated "T" and "M" ("Mature") featured 4.59 violent interactions per minute, by comparison to 1.17 violent interactions per minute for games rated "E" ("Everyone") or "K-A" ("Kids to Adults").

Motivations: Why Play Violent Video Games?

A study released by the Kaiser Family Foundation (1999) suggested that boys from age 8 to age 18 play video games for more than 40 minutes a day. On the basis of these findings, Smith estimated that those choosing "T" or "M" games were being exposed to approximately 180 violent interactions each day, an indication of the prevalence of violence in video games as a means of achieving an overall objective as well as the "saturation" of extreme physical aggression in games (Smith, 2006, p. 64). Frequent exposure to violent interactions can develop and reinforce aggressive scripts as a means of solving interpersonal conflict (Huesmann, 1988; Lee & Peng, 2006). At the same time, violent games can be used to vent anger and relieve stress, which heightens the emotional appeal of a game (Olson, 2010). Studies have found that, when competence and mastery of a game are important to the individual player, the level of violence is of little significance if nonviolent games offer similar degrees of opportunity and challenge (Olson, 2010). Violent content offers little to no effect in terms of game enjoyment, value, or desire for future play among young adults (Przybylski, Ryan, & Rigby, 2009), and no significant relationship exists between trait anger or aggressive personality and greater use of mature-rated games (Olson et al., 2009).

There are several theories that attempt to explain the popularity of violent video games, including excitation transfer, social learning, and uses and gratifications. Excitation transfer theory (Zillmann, 1983) posits that people live vicariously through media figures. While engaged in watching television or playing games, individuals can experience emotions similar to those that the character is experiencing (Miller, 2010). This vicarious emotion could be even more extreme for video games, because they are more interactive in nature than other media (Gentile, Saleem, & Anderson, 2007; Grodal, 2000; Konijn, Bijvank, & Bushman, 2007). Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow suggests that arousal and relaxation are dual components of enjoyment (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996, p. 331). Media usage, including video game play, allows participants to escape from the "real world" while engaging in fantasy behavior.

From a cognitive perspective, Grodal (2000) argued that video game fascination can be largely attributed to one's control or mastery over the game, either in how the game progresses or in its outcome. When players optimize their mental and motor capacity to control the level and speed of the game, they are also optimizing their own arousal; thus video games are a tool for emotional control. Because many popular video games, including violent "shooter" games such as *Quake*, require a combination of cognitive skills to achieve success, the effect of such

games may be less about violent or aggressive content and more about the positive reinforcement or satisfaction achieved through the successful mastery of the game.

Social learning theory is another cognitive theory that suggests that individuals learn through observing and modeling others' appearance, actions, and reactions (Bandura, 2001). Through video games, players can experiment with numerous possible selves, pretending to have different personalities, dispositions, and behaviors (Giles & Maltby, 2004). In an experimental study, McDonald and Kim (2001) asked middle school aged children to name the characteristics they would most like to have, while also listing the characteristics of their favorite video game characters. The characteristics on both lists were quite similar, indicating that children wish to be like their favorite characters. Similarly, Olson, Kutner, and Warner (2007) found that boys aged 12 to 14 indicated that they used games to express their fantasies about strength, fame, and power.

Probably the most insightful research on the motivations of playing violent video games was generated in the uses and gratifications of video game play. This theory proposes that an audience actively seeks out appropriate media to gratify itself (Blumler & Katz, 1974). In one of the earliest studies applying uses and gratifications theory to video game play, Selnow (1984) found that action/activity and solitude/escape were among five uses and gratifications identified among pre-teens and teenagers (ages 10–19) and young adults (ages 20–24) who played arcade games. Stress reduction and arousal, activity/action, solitude/escape, excitement, and tension reduction were all gratifications identified by Griffiths (1991a, 1991b) in research on video game addiction.

More recently, Sherry, Desouza, Greenberg, and Lachlan (2003) used focus groups and surveys to identify uses and gratifications of video games among teenagers and young adults. These studies reported that video games were used as a means of diversion (e.g., relaxation or escape from stress), fantasy (e.g., to do things that they normally would not be able to do), and arousal (e.g., the stimulation of emotions through fast action and high-quality graphics). Sherry referred to these findings in his discussion of differences in media effects at the individual level (Sherry, 2004, p. 329), citing contextual social factors that motivated individuals to seek gratification by escaping to a fantasy world of exciting and attractive characters. He also pointed out a contradiction in uses and gratifications research that suggests media can be both arousing and relaxing.

Effects of Playing Video Games

The burning question that drives the field concerns the effects of playing violent video games. Meta-analytic review has been widely employed in the last decade to quantify the effects of violent video games; several have reported significant harmful effects of exposure to violent video games, both in short-term experimental studies and in cross-sectional correlational studies (see Anderson, 2004; Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Anderson et al., 2004; Sherry, 2001).

These reviews found that, across these two research methodologies, exposure to violent video games is associated with a range of outcomes, including higher levels of aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, aggressive behavior, and physiological arousal and with lower levels of prosocial behavior. In a most recent meta-analysis, Anderson et al. (2010) argued that the evidence strongly suggests that exposure to violent video games is a causal risk factor for increased undesirable effects such as aggressiveness (including the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects) and for decreased empathy and prosocial behavior.

Scholars are in agreement that a number of broad-scale predictions concerning the effects of violent video games are possible. For example, all else being equal, participants randomly assigned to play a violent video game should tend to behave more aggressively for a short period of time afterward than those randomly assigned to play an equally fun and equally challenging nonviolent video game (Anderson et al., 2010).

Short-term effects of violent video game play are usually assessed in experimental studies conducted in labs or in schools (Anderson et al., 2010) and are defined as effects displayed in situations in which a person plays a video game for a brief time (e.g., 15 minutes) before relevant measures can be obtained. Long-term effects are effects that accrue from repeated exposure over a relatively long period of time, such as several months or years. Long-term effects typically are assessed in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. In general, both short-term and long-term effects of environmental variables (e.g., insult, physical pain, violent media) on aggressive behavior operate by affecting cognitive, emotional, and/or arousal systems (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 154).

The current trends in violent video game effects research suggest something close to a consensus regarding the short-term harmful effect. Researchers tend to disagree on the long-term effects because of inconsistent or insufficient empirical evidence.

Immediate short-term effects are mainly the results of priming existing knowledge structures, such as various types of schemata and scripts (see Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). Priming processes require only (a) a person who already has at least a few well-developed aggression scripts; and (b) brief exposure to a video game that requires violent action. There need be no surface-level similarity between the violence in the video game and the aggression measure, as long as the person's aggression scripts have been activated. Once aggressive scripts have been activated, additional exposure to the violent video game is unlikely to have more than a minimal impact on later aggressive behavior (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 155). Most video game violence researchers suggested that the existing short-term effects are mainly the result of priming effects (e.g., Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2007; Anderson et al., 2003; Bushman & Huesmann, 2006; Kirsh, 2006; Krahe, 2001).

Equally concerning are the physiological effects shown in adolescents and teenagers who play violent video games. Violent media, in general, may cause audiences to develop more aggressive thoughts and a higher level of physiological arousal. Video games, particularly those that are targeted toward adolescents and teenagers,

may heighten these effects by encouraging aggressive behavior, priming aggressive cognitions, increasing arousal, and creating an aggressive affective state. For example, games such as *WWE SmackDown vs. Raw* teach complex and aggressive wrestling moves, which may result in audiences copying these moves and potentially killing or seriously injuring someone. These effects may be even greater among younger players who already exhibit aggressive tendencies.

On the other hand, some researchers have challenged findings that suggest a relationship between violent video games and dangerous anti-social behavior. In fact, scholars have argued that aggressive content in video games can allow players to release anger and stress in a non-destructive way (Bowman & Rotter, 1983; Kestenbaum & Weinstein, 1985), essentially by using the games to channel their own anger and ultimately find relaxation. At the same time, the notion of symbolic catharsis – purging aggressive emotions as a means of release (Golden, 1992; Scheele, 2001; Scheff, 1979) – is based in a realm of fantasy not unlike the virtual world of video games. The cathartic release provided by violent video games may take the form of sexual or aggressive gratification experienced during or after the game.

Also, critics pointed out that the interactivity of less violent games, such as sports or racing games, may lead to increased arousal or higher levels of stimulation rather than increased aggression. This speaks to the overall appeal of video games: the opportunity to interact with the content. The mastery of many video games requires a combination of cognitive and motor skills, which players develop through repetitive play. Even violent video games can be effective in the development of vital motor and psychological skills – when, for example, a player must think and react quickly in a hostile situation in order to kill someone.

Long-term effects from gaming mainly result from relatively permanent changes in beliefs, expectancies, scripts, attitudes, and other related personal factors that are brought about by repeated exposure to video game violence (Anderson et al., 2010). Because these personal factors are relatively stable, repeated exposure to video game violence (or to other environmental risk factors) is required in order to create significant change in the players. Another factor important in understanding the long-term effects of exposure to violent media is whether the person's environment encourages or discourages aggression. This may be why it appears that having parents who are very involved in one's media usage sometimes acts as a protective factor (e.g., Anderson et al., 2007). On the other hand, if highly involved parents actively encourage violent behavior, they are likely to exacerbate the media violence effect (Anderson et al., 2010).

It is also believed that long-term exposure to video game violence can effectively "desensitize" an audience to the unpleasant physiological arousal normally associated with violence. There is concern that continuous exposure to violent depictions can actually inhibit thinking about violence and can lead to an overall disregard for violence. While this may prevent gamers from behaving violently, the damage is inflicted through their overall immunity to violence in general. Teenagers may be aroused by the content in a violent video game, but the

violence itself becomes alarmingly irrelevant. However, no study has documented empirical evidence of long-term effects of playing or exposure to violent video games.

Theorizing the Effects of Video Games

Several theoretical frames and theories exist in the literature; they are based on past research that theorizes the harmful effects of violent video games. Among them, the general aggression model (GAM) is perhaps the most cited theory about aggressive effects of violent video games (Brake, 2006; Jansz, 2006). Proposed by Anderson and Bushman (2001), the GAM suggests that playing a violent video game can cause violent thoughts, feelings, and even physical symptoms (elevated heart rate) that, if repeated over time, can change habits of behavior, leading to more aggression.

GAM is based on several earlier models of human aggression (e.g., Anderson, Anderson, & Deuser, 1996; Anderson, Deuser, & DeNeve, 1995; Bandura, 1971, 1973; Berkowitz, 1993; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Geen, 1990; Huesmann, 1986; Lindsay & Anderson, 2000; Zillmann, 1983) and is a useful framework for understanding the effects of violent media, or why exposure to violent media increases aggression and violence (Anderson & Bushman, 2001, p. 355).

However, some scholars (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010) have cautioned about making sweeping generalizations based on GAM and cite key factors that need to be fully considered in relation to the effect of violent video games.

First, predicting the pattern of all the possible combinations of variables in video game studies requires a thorough knowledge of the processes engaged by the video game (e.g., effect of third-person shooter versus first-person shooter; do gorier games have more impact than less gory games?). Without knowledge of how well each specific game activates aggressive thoughts, feelings, and physiological arousal, any prediction is merely speculative (Anderson et al., 2010).

Second, there is the importance of assessing potential short-term and long-term effects of different types of violent video games. Although social cognitive models such as GAM allow several important predictions concerning the likely short-term and long-term effects of exposure to violent video games, the effects of video game violence might depend on whether they are examined as short- or long-term effects. The distinction is critical because the same stimulus can have multiple effects on several factors that facilitate or inhibit aggression. For example, playing a video game with sanitized violence versus a bloody version of the same game may lead to similar levels of aggressive behavior in the immediate situation, whereas repeated exposure to one version or the other may result in the bloodier version having greater long-term effects (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 154).

In addition, situational factors that may condition the aggressive cognition effect of video games is of particular importance; many situational factors can increase arousal and anger, even in certain nonviolent video games. For instance,

race-driving video games, sports video games, and even perceptual/motor skills games that require intense concentration and rapid responses can increase heart rate and blood pressure. Similarly, video games that are too fast-paced or too difficult for the player are likely to increase frustration and anger, which in turn might activate aggressive thoughts. A critical distinction is that violent video games, by their nature, require the activation of aggressive thoughts, whereas nonviolent games do not require it (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 155).

Furthermore, the repeated activation of aggressive thoughts is the most likely route to relatively permanent changes in the individual, as the activation of aggression-related knowledge structures becomes more automatic and chronic with repetition. The negative effect and the physiological arousal instigated by a video game (violent or nonviolent) dissipate fairly quickly and are less likely to leave long-term traces in the brain than the cognitive learning and over-learning of aggression-related perceptual and social schemata (including aggressive behavioral scripts) that are rehearsed constantly while playing violent games (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 155).

To address the limitations of social cognitive models like GAM, recent studies by Weber and others have taken a neuroscientific approach to examine the effects of viewing violence on children and young adults, using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to detect patterns that are likely to reflect aggressive cognitions (Weber, Ritterfeld, & Mathiak, 2006). Yet, while aggressive video games have been found to stimulate the same brain activity as real-life aggression – and first-person shooter (FPS) games appear to make the game, and consequently the violence, more personal – Weber's research suggests that violent video games do not necessarily make everyone violent (Murray, 2008). For example, neural patterns in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) normally associated with aggressive cognition and behavior may reflect a suppression of positive emotions (such as empathy), enabling the player to successfully master the game, or fear, which is elicited in a virtual environment when a player's virtual life is endangered (Weber et al., 2006). Although the neuroscientifc approach opens up a new avenue for violent video games research – results obtained from such studies are based primarily on the experiences of individual players – the generalizability is yet to be tested.

Moderators of Effects of Violent Video Games: Demographics

Like other streams in mass communication research, research of effects concerning violent video games leads characteristically to a paradigm of conditional effect. In other words, media can work through one or more moderators or mediators prior to having an impact on a particular dependent variable (McLeod & Reeves, 1980). Past research has identified a range of factors moderating the relationship between playing violent video games and aggression-related outcome variables. Key demographic variables are among such moderators. Youths between the ages

of 8 and 18 were found to spend more than 40 hours per week using some type of media, and, while television is most frequently used, electronic video games are rapidly growing in popularity (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Kubisch, 2006). In the United States, boys spend 13 hours per week and girls spend five hours per week playing video games (Gentile, Lynch, Linder, & Walsh, 2004). In terms of frequency, 94 percent of middle-aged children play games; a third of these boys and 11 percent of these girls play nearly every day (Olson et al., 2007).

The ESA (2011) report found that the average game player is 37 years old and has been playing games for 12 years, while the average age of the most frequent game purchaser is 41 years. Forty-two percent of all gamers are women. In fact, women over the age of 18 represent a significantly greater portion of the game-playing population (37 percent) than boys aged 17 or younger (13 percent). In 2011, 29 percent of Americans over the age of 50 played video games, an increase from 9 percent in 1999.

The use of electronic games is greatest at the age of 13, and then it decreases in terms of gaming time. During the peak ages for playing electronic games, ages 12–13, young people play for more than 30 minutes a day, and boys play three times as long as girls (Kubisch, 2006). After the age of 15, the rate falls to a level that is lower than the rate for 9–10-year-olds. As children get older, they increasingly prefer online games; boys turn to e-games for excitement about three times more often than girls do (Kubisch, 2006).

There are also clear differences in game preference on the basis of age and gender. Boys' interest in various genres is generally constant across age groups. They prefer fast-action games: fighting games, sports games, and car games between the ages of 6 and 16. At about the age of 11, boys develop an interest in games in which they must plan things (Kubisch, 2006). Girls, on the other hand, tend to prefer narrative games, but girls in all age groups also seem interested in adventure games.

Females, too, have an interest in video games with violent or aggressive content. A report released by the ESA in June 2011 indicated that 42 percent of gamers are women, and that women aged 18 or older represent more than one third of the game-playing population. A study by Sherry, Lucas, Greenberg, and Lachlan (2006) found that 45 percent of 8th- and 10th-grade female respondents rated violent shooter games positively. Sherry (2004, p. 344) states that general patterns of gender differences in video game use and preference are reflected not only in content, but also in the cognitive differences between the sexes that contribute to the enjoyment of games. The synergy between flow theory and uses and gratifications research provides an explanation of gender differences in video game enjoyment. Where challenge is a source of enjoyment (gratification) in video game play, flow theory identifies the mechanisms and features that affect flow – that is, experiencing enjoyment through arousal and relaxation (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996). Males have been shown to have greater cognitive skills in areas typically associated with aggressive or violent video games – including three-dimensional (3D) rotation and targeting – but females who possess stronger

3D rotation abilities than males are more likely to enjoy shooter genre games than their male counterparts (Sherry, 2004). Conclusions should not be reached solely on the basis of cognitive processing.

Methodological Challenges in Researching Effects of Video Games

The inconsistencies and controversial findings in past research have a great deal to do with methodologies used to generate evidence. Meta-analyses of the experimental literature (studies that attempt to combine the results of several articles on similar themes) have suggested that, where playing violent video games is linked to violent behavior or attitudes, it explains about 4 percent of such behavior (Brake, 2006). But, because of the artificial nature of the experimental aggression testing, these and other similar findings have been questioned by other scholars. It is widely accepted that, if there is a connection between violent video game use and violence, it is only one of several influencing factors (Brake, 2006).

Additionally, Brake (2006) noted that, for ethical reasons, direct experiments on children have not been conducted; experiments have been done with college students and survey-based studies have been conducted with minors. While surveys of both children and adults have shown a link between playing violent electronic video games and violent attitudes and behavior, it is not clear whether the games stimulate violence or whether violent children tend to prefer violent games (or both). Studies tracking players over a period of years would be necessary to determine which of these factors is more important and to help understand whether any effects are short term or long term (Brake, 2006). Such research designs are critical for establishing more definitive theories of causation.

Implications of the Research for Policymaking

Lawmakers in the United States have long been concerned about the content and effects of video games (Miller, 2010). Several researchers testified before the US Senate in 2000 that there are valid reasons, both theoretical and empirical, to be concerned about exposing youths to violent video games (Anderson, 2000). In 2006 the Senate approved funding for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to study the effects of electronic media.

Video games have faced various types of regulation, including industry self-regulation and restrictions on sales of games (see ECA, 2008). But, to date, courts have not been receptive to legislation that restricts sales of games, generally finding a lack of evidence of a causal relationship between games and violence (*Entertainment Software Association v. Hatch*, 2006; *Interactive Digital Software Association v. St. Louis County*, 2003). In June 2011, the US Supreme Court struck down a California state law banning the sale of violent video games to minors

(Liptak, 2011), affirming that video games deemed to be "patently offensive" and to appeal to minors' "deviant or morbid interests" are still afforded full First Amendment protection.

International Research

Around the world, people of all ages are frequently exposed to violent media content, and the global popularity of video games has prompted researchers to consider the effects of violent content on gamers living in Eastern and Western cultures. A majority of studies on the effects of video game violence have been based in the US or have come from Western cultures with similar individualistic values and characteristics. They were reviewed extensively in this chapter.

Outside the US, scholars have examined the video game content preferences and playing habits of adolescents in the United Kingdom (Colwell & Payne, 2000), Denmark (Schierbeck & Carstens, 2000), and Germany (Feierabend & Klingler, 2003; Fromme & Gecius, 1997) and identified associations between age, gender, and preferred game content or genre. A longitudinal study of German third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders conducted by von Salisch, Kristen, and Oppl (2004) was one of the first to link violent video games and aggression to primary school students; it found that students deemed "aggressive" by teachers and peers spent more time playing video games, but it reached no conclusion as to the motivations for playing violent games (see also Salisch, Oppl, & Kristen, 2006). These findings are consistent with those reported in the US.

The literature has been enriched by studies exploring video game content, play motivations, and effects in Eastern collectivist societies, which are characterized by high moral discipline and traditional values of peace and nonviolence (Anderson et al., 2010). Studies have explored contextual differences in video game violence (Yahiro, 2005), differences in the processing of emotions (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006; Mesquita & Leu, 2007), and the context in which video games are played (Anderson et al., 2010; Colwell & Kato, 2003) as predictors of effect differentials between Eastern and Western cultures. In a panel study of Japanese fifth-graders, Shibuya, Sakamoto, Ihori, and Yukawa (2008) concluded that the quality and context of violent content is more significant than the amount of violence depicted and should be an important consideration when studying long-range effects of video game violence. A study by Wei (2007) of video game violence and of its effects on Chinese adolescents found sustained relationships between exposure to violent content and pro-violent attitudes but a non-significant link between exposure and aggression. This suggested that, among Chinese young video game players, the effects of playing violent video games were greater on attitudinal outcomes than on overt behavior.

Questions remain, however, on the role played by cross-cultural differences in violent media content and its effects on adolescents and young adults (Anderson et al., 2010). Colwell and Kato (2005, p. 529) found similarities in frequency of

play and aggression between players in the United Kingdom and Japan, but no significant relationship between aggressive play and aggressive behavior in either sample; in consequence he suggested that such results "lend more support to the reverse causal link – aggression causes play of video games, many of which are aggressive in nature."

Yet, in a meta-analytic review of violent video game effect studies in Eastern and Western cultures, Anderson et al. (2010, p. 162) summarized that, "regardless of research design or conservativeness of analysis," evidence exists that playing violent video games increases aggression over time and that these effects "appear to generalize across culture." More cross-cultural comparative analysis is needed to advance the theory building of effects of playing violent video games.

Concluding Remarks

Research on the effects of violent video games is robust in testing the hypothesis that exposure to such content poses a public health threat to children and youths and consequently is a major social concern. Exposure has been found to be positively associated with heightened levels of aggression in young adults and children, in experimental and non-experimental designs, and in males and females, while being negatively associated with prosocial behavior. Exposure has also been found to be positively related to the main mechanism underlying long-term effects on the development of aggressive personality cognition and positively linked to aggressive affect and physiological arousal. Others, however, have questioned whether video game violence poses any significant effect on overt behavior, challenging the validity of experimental aggression testing and citing the absence of direct experiments on children as limitations in the existing scholarship. As noted by Anderson and Bushman (2001) – two of the most cited scholars in this stream of research – reliance on case studies of highly publicized school killings committed by individuals who habitually played violent video games is insufficient grounds for adopting and enforcing governmental policies against the video gaming industry.

Scholars do tend to agree, however, that the precautionary principle should prevail: Children should be protected from violent content in video games. While the results are mixed on its potential harm, no evidence exists to suggest that violence in games is in itself beneficial.

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31

Empowerment and Online Social Networking

Jarice Hanson

Introduction

Online social networks have changed how we communicate in myriad ways. While they have provided free or low-cost pathways for users to communicate with one another or with broader social groups in synchronous or asynchronous time across national or political borders, they also privilege individual voices and opinions, which might not have been heard in the days before digital communication, and the distribution network of the Internet. Fundamentally, the personal nature of communicating over the Internet appears, on the surface at least, to empower individuals to register their personal messages in micro situations such as participation on a fan site or a dating service or to express their identity in something as seemingly simple as a Facebook wall.

For macro issues – such as organizing for social or political mobilization, participating in civic engagement, or utilizing what appears to be democratic purposes – the Internet can also be viewed as facilitating the empowerment of those who traditionally have not had access to low-cost means to organize and express their collectivity. In 2011, the success of the Arab Spring mobilization gave anecdotal credibility to the idea of social networking and empowerment; but, when it comes to examining specific situations, a "rear-view mirror" (McLuhan, 1969)[1] assessment allows a more informed, subtly nuanced analysis of the theoretical applicability of social networks for true empowerment. The purpose of this chapter is to apply new theoretical constructions to the unique situation of online social networks by investigating the issue of personal and collective empowerment. To better illustrate the applicability of the new theoretical constructions, ideas of identity, false consciousness, and collective intelligence are addressed to demonstrate the tensions

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in and among the realities of online social networks and their ability to empower individuals and collectivities or to delude those same people into thinking that online social networks enable empowerment.

What is seminal in this argument, however, is the notion of communication through digital means. Digital communication is privileged by the speed and relative low cost of its transmission; but it suffers shortcomings that spring from these same characteristics. Digital interactions are often emotionally charged, representing an "in the moment" response of a sender that may not be reflected in the receiver's interpretation of the message. Therefore "empowerment" is a slippery term; the empowerment may, in the case of micro examples, take place at the moment of the sending of a message, by receiving the reaction of someone to a message sent. In macro examples, empowerment may be the sum total of a longer "campaign" of like-minded messages that allow communities to coalesce.

The relationships that form through social networks – whether relationships emerging from interpersonal networks of power and control such as those described by organizational communication theorists (Cross & Parker, 2004) or relationships formed and maintained in online social networks so familiar to contemporary media scholars – all combine theories, models, and perspectives from what, in the early days of communication research, was separated into "interpersonal" and "media" categories. A different theoretical construct emerged from mathematics and engineering (and, later, from computer science) and emphasized the control of the electrical or computerized system; this adds yet another dimension – that of the technology, conceived of as both a tool and a part of a human–technological system. Recent developments in contemporary research have begun to acknowledge a tendency to see human and technological systems as conjoined; this sometimes discredits the human mind's complexity and over-emphasizes the panoptic and pervasive power of large technological systems like the Internet. Or, from the perspective of behavioral science, the tools of online social media are completely pushed aside while the behavior of the individual takes prominence, in a return to the anthropological sense of humans as tool-using individuals.

It is important to realize that emerging theories dealing with the nature of interactive technologies and a wide range of social applications and contexts advance our ideas of what actually constitutes a scientific theory. From Kuhn's articulation of the process of scientific change in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962), which dominated twentieth-century science, to a more dynamically interactive, less reductionist approach to the way human beings interact with and respond to technologies in the service of their own personal communications, we see that theories, too, are dynamic, changeable, and adaptive. What serves us better today is the understanding that both the technology and the human being are co-dependent, and therefore traditional theoretical inquiry may need to be re-evaluated or re-envisioned for contemporary times.

When we take a basic concept like "communication" and apply it to new modes of message exchange, are we forging new paradigms, or are we attempting to force old theories into new contexts? To better answer this question, this chapter draws

on three "hybrid" theories that are increasingly used to understand the power and impact of communication through online social networks: web theory, network theory, and systems theory. All of them combine both human and technological systems, which is necessitated by an inquiry into the impact of online social networks. These different theoretical perspectives, individually and collectively, consider some specific communicative elements in which online social networking is unique, but what they have in common is the sense of meaning the individual takes from the communicative experience. On the micro side, personal social networks and the positionality of the individual explain how the expression and articulation of identity becomes the measure of personal "power," either for oneself or over someone else. In the macro sense, social networks for political and social mobilization can contextualize the dynamics of identity and community as a measure of "power" understood as an organizing principle for a collectivity of individuals. More commonly, in each situation, the term "empowerment" is used to describe how online social networks allow the individual to feel personal empowerment or the community to collectively gain power.

Defining the Terms

While there is a good number of subtle variations on the term "empowerment" – ranging from applied concepts of interpersonal communication theory, feminist theory, or participatory development communication theory to the realm of political, economic, and social dynamics – the noun stresses the element of "power" in every application. Within the study of social networks, "empowerment" generally stresses the application of the power of individuals to express themselves or to articulate views within an organizational schema. In many cases, the term "empowerment" involves taking action or leading toward activism; but, as discussed in the specific case studies considered later in this chapter, online *cyberactivism* is actually an extreme application of empowerment, usually undertaken in extreme political situations.

What is equally important, however, is that the term "empowerment" places attention on the individual and often negates the connotative or denotative impact of technology or the distribution systems inherent in the process of sending messages over social networks. Personal and collective identity is central to the issue of empowerment. How one expresses identity and understands "belonging" or "not belonging" to or affiliation with a communicative context is one of the most seminal ideas behind empowerment and social networks. Similarly, the user-friendliness of online social networks often obviates the controlled structure of the technological system. How much empowerment does a person have, if his or her personal information is collected, sifted, and sold to third parties who do not remind that person that what he or she does and how he or she interacts in a social network becomes commoditized for the social network provider?

Identity in social networks is also tied to concepts of community or to a sense of belonging to a group and having some sort of bonding or connection to others, a place for reciprocity and recognition, and a place where people feel that there is a commonality among those who participate in the community (Willson, 2006, pp. 24–30). Both in personal uses of social networks and in more complex situations where social networking may be the most inexpensive, the uncensored way of organizing people for social and political mobilization, identity, and community often make the connection between individuals, messages, and the larger social interpretation of what really happens in and through the process of using online social networks.

As the concept of the *digital divide*[2] evolved, issues of access to technology took precedence over the acknowledgment of the important role of technological hardware and architecture as critical factors for understanding the uses and impact of digital technology – especially in relation to communication over the Internet (a distribution system) and the World Wide Web (a layer of architecture that facilitates one-to-one or one-to-many communications through a set of connections to different databases). In many cases, traditional theories that may have applied to the mass media fail to recognize the unique characteristics of the Internet/Web mediation.

Social Networks

While the expression "social network" may be thought to be a current description of online communication, the concept has a strong theoretical history through organizational communication and sociology. Both Durkheim (1893 = 1934) and Tönnies (1887 = 1957) wrote extensively on the role of social ties in social groups far before the Internet was a reality. An early twentieth century sociologist, Georg Simmel, referred to the "web of group affiliations" (Nedelmann, 2001, p. 69) decades before the World Wide Web had its first URL. What each of these scholars – and many more – contributed to the study of group behavior became the foundation for the electronic means of allowing individuals to interact over the complicated digital Internet and Web architecture, starting in the 1960s, when the Internet became available for military use in the United States, and especially from the early 1990s, when it became available for public use.

The phrase *social network* as we know it today gained popularity throughout the early 2000s, as Web 2.0 became available, making Internet and Web traffic faster, more interactive, and more user-friendly. The early services for interpersonal communication, like Friendster (created in 2002), MySpace (in 2003), and Facebook (in 2004), to name a few popular social networks, specialized in allowing individuals to communicate with each other directly or collectively over these networks, which were ostensibly created to facilitate interaction. At the same time, Web 2.0 architecture made it possible for peer-to-peer file sharing and for computers to gather information about those who used these user-friendly services.

While individuals flocked to these services and others, thinking that their messages were private and secure, the architecture of the Internet and Web actually created vast databases of personal information, which, if not safeguarded and protected by the companies delivering the services, could expose individuals' passwords, Internet addresses, and record of transactions. Therefore, while users often felt empowered to share personal information, they have often found out – too late – that virtually anything transmitted over the Internet can and might be stolen by hackers or through glitches in the system. This vulnerability inherent in social networks is now understood to be more limited than was first imagined, but it is still a critical component of using online social networks for the transmission of any personal information.

Theoretically, however, in social networks that are dependent upon the Internet and/or the web, the human user of the system or its technology becomes a part of the cybernetic system; the technology gives feedback, and the human gives feedback. As a result, the individual and the technology become intertwined; architecture and use become a part of the entire transmission and transaction. The depersonalization of thinking in these terms shifts the meaning and importance of empowerment and message exchange to the technological system, which uses people as one element of the complete interaction.

Fortunately, scholars are now attempting to situate interactive digital technologies within a new paradigm. Some of the theories that are most likely to survive in this "brave new world" of interactive communication are (a) web theory; (b) network theory; and (c) systems theory. What these theories have in common is that they examine aspects of technological architecture applied to social contexts in order to understand who may or may not experience personal empowerment through social networks under what conditions. This epistemological approach to understanding the impact of social networks allows scholars a significant amount of latitude in offering explanations toward constructing theoretical interpretations of social network applications within a given time and space.

These three approaches also introduce new vocabulary for the discussion of humans and technological systems working together. Norbert Weiner's concept of *cybernetics* offers an important heuristic for this inquiry. In 1948 Wiener published a theory of communication and control to describe how people send messages within systems in order to control their environment (Wiener, 1948; see Wiener, 1954, p. 15). His idea was that human communication is the same thing as machine communication. When a person sends a message, he or she only knows whether the message has been received if there is some response – either interpersonally or technologically. In 1954 he elaborated upon his 1948 thesis:

> society can only be understood through a study of the messages and communication facilities which belong to it; and … in the future development of these messages and communication facilities, messages between man and machines, between machines and man, and between machine and machine, are destined to play an ever increasing part. (Wiener, 1954, p. 15)

The control that he discussed imposes an overarching reality on social networking and Internet communication. Additionally, the concept of *feedback* becomes a critical component of the message exchange, since it is at the same time that the message senders and its receivers actually know that some interaction has been made; the interactants then may modify their positions to reflect the type of feedback they have received.

Yochai Benkler (2006) takes a more nuanced view of the cybernetic system afforded by the Internet. In his 2006 book *The Wealth of Networks*, Benkler views the system as one that is inherently democratic and driven by sharing information. The online system is, then, in Benkler's view, one in which the dynamic nature of the cybernetic system drives change, even though that change is in a system that incorporates individuals, technologies, and information.

Henry Jenkins (2006) also takes a forward-thinking viewpoint with regard to what happens in the system; audience participation and contribution that takes place in an interactive medium like the Internet generates collaborative content production. Calling this phenomenon a *convergence culture*, Jenkins also takes a positive approach toward understanding the dynamics of people interacting with each other and with the architecture of the technology.

While people often think that the Internet and the World Wide Web are synonymous, there is a very important distinction between the two. The Internet is like a system of highways and transportation pathways, but the web adds a dimension of architecture that requires documents to be coded in HTML (HyperText Markup Language), which allows documents to link together. Text, graphics, audio, and data seem to be seamlessly flowing together on the web, but it takes special servers to make this traffic seem seamless. Not all uses of the Internet have this connectivity ability. So, if the Internet is a system of highways, the web is more like a system of coordinated traffic lights and signals that facilitates some information over the public pathway of the Internet. As it will become apparent, control of both the Internet and the web, and access to one more exclusively than to the other, significantly affect the ability of individuals and groups to use these tools for possible identity creation, maintenance, and potential empowerment.

Web Theory

The web is far more complicated than the Internet, and because it is subject to a set of protocols, architecture, and filters, the concept of web theory has become more prominent of late. Burnett and Marshall (2003) persuasively articulated the concepts of web theory as centralized around and integrated with ideas of identity:

> In a sense, the Web is a flourishing location for the negotiating of new boundaries and delineations around identity. The definitive "effect" of the Web is somewhat elusive; but what we can conclude is that the Web highlights and challenges the boundaries

> around the following series of crucial identity tropes: Anonymity, Narcissism, [and] Gender. (Burnett & Marshall, 2003: 78–79)

These tropes will be discussed at length in subsequent sections, but they most definitely add the range of interpersonal characteristics to the experience of social networks, empowerment, and social context.

The implications for social networks and the Internet/web, along with the multiple readings individuals take from their use, their identification with technology, and the images they project of themselves into social networks become a rich, complicated set of structures and relationships. The challenge to understand this multilayered communications matrix has posed newer, more complicated theoretical frameworks for scholars that often require revisiting old theories that fell into convenient categories of "interpersonal or intercultural" communication, or "mass media," or "mediated" communication. This means that unraveling meaning from theories and contexts may be potentially more complicated, but these theories and contexts can also be viewed as far richer and more meaningful.

Network Theory

Network theory is an emerging area, in which traditional scientific principles are viewed in a somewhat more contemporary light. Along with the web theory described above, network theory also incorporates concepts of time and space. The meaning of information (or messages) is created because the individuals who use the architecture "layer" meanings that are based upon the multiple realities of online and offline worlds. As Barabasi has observed:

> Today we increasingly recognize that nothing happens in isolation. Most events and phenomena are connected, caused by, and interacting with a huge number of other pieces of a complex universal puzzle. We have come to see that we live in a small world, where everything is linked to everything else. We are witnessing a revolution in the making as scientists from all different disciplines discover that complexity has a strict architecture. We have come to grasp the importance of networks. (Barabasi, 2003, p. 7)

Network theory, then, adds a very specific dimension to web theory; it extends the ability to make meaning over time and place and among a number of interpersonal and technological systems. From the cybernetic, closed system of the web, network theory extends our concepts of self and identity to a broader universe, where we operate on multiple levels of real world and cyber world message exchange and understanding. We must, then, imagine the cybernetic system as composed of humans and machines, connected through architectures modeled by mathematics that in turn model human behavior and are influenced by internal and external values and social forces.

Systems Theory

When biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy introduced his systems perspective in 1950, his goal was to integrate the principles common to all biological systems, like biological, physical, and chemical systems. Focusing on the interaction of multiple systems, his ideas advanced organizational communication theory too, by describing how different systems actually interacted and modified group behavior by making them keep one another in check while they still moved consensually toward a new sense of purpose. Little did he realize that his work would be echoed so well by communication theorists, who found that the concept of all systems having hierarchical structures would lend itself to understanding communication as an integrated process (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2009, p. 101).

Today, many of the original concepts of the early theorists contribute to what we understand about the dynamics of technological and human systems, as the latter are constrained by the architecture of the former in online social networks. Dynamically, data move in a manner that integrates human-made messages through the technological "screens" (literal and metaphorical) that computer interaction over the Internet and the web facilitates.

What we have learned, however, is that empowerment through social networks may have a wide range of interpretations, subject to the message sender's intention (stated and implied) as well as to the purpose of the message sent (to connect with someone, to make a personal statement, or to influence others). For example, online communication through social networks operates in a cyberworld where physical social cues are absent. Tone of voice, body language, gestures, or a raised eyebrow communicate volumes in interpersonal settings, but the lack of social cues in online communication opens the messages to a wider range of interpretations, subjectively made by those who see the messages online. To better illustrate the potential and the limits of online empowerment through social networks, a look at micro and macro views of communication delineates some of the key issues behind theorizing and practicing empowerment through social networks.

Micro Issues

While categorizing personal communication as a "micro" issue, I do not mean to belittle or disparage the amount of personal empowerment that may occur through the use of social networks. Like most technologies and technological systems, online social networks can be both positive and negative; they can be immensely empowering for some individuals and frighteningly disempowering for others. The time and space afforded by communicating over social networks are a boon to communication in general, though power relationships can often occur. The difference afforded by time and space issues can be seen in the case of

those who are unable to communicate in traditional face-to-face situations by virtue of real, physical place, space, or ability, as well as in situations where more dominant individuals capitalize on the weaknesses of those who are socially disempowered. These restricted communications are often viewed as something that provides a unique context for the role of a social network, whether the problems occur through the *disability divide* – such are those caused by a person's physical or mental inability to use technology (Baker, Hanson, & Myhill, 2009, p. 47), or through lack of skill – a type of problem called the *second level digital divide* (Hargittai, 2002).

Assuming that both interactants in a social network have physical and skill ability, other, more subtle psychological or social issues may cause an imbalance in the power relationships between individuals. It is generally agreed that social networks often attract individuals suffering from social anxiety – those who prefer to interact online rather than in face-to-face situations. In its most severe sense, social anxiety often leads to communication apprehension, a disorder that results from "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person" (McCrosky, 1983, p. 16). Certainly cyberbullying is an example of using social networks and other digital technologies to overpower individuals and to create a hostile environment for someone who is not physically, emotionally, or mentally able to use social networks in his or her own quest for a balanced, fair sense of self vis-à-vis others.

Anonymity is also a critical trope within web theory. It often allows a social network user to hide behind a pseudonym or fictitious identity that may give the illusion of empowerment to the person exercising this pseudo-identity. Phishing for information and misleading other participants on social networks can make some users feel empowered or powerful, while contributing to the disempowerment of others, who may be duped by this type of interaction (Hanson, 2007, pp. 79–93) or put off by perceived threats of phishing or simply by information overload.

Narcissism is an interesting phenomenon online, because in social networking people often tend to describe not only who they are, but who they are at their best. This type of narcissism feeds on the individual's use of social networks in a private, personal place, and it may often result in an unintended glorification of one's sense of self. The image one creates for oneself often glorifies some aspects of one's identity while downplaying others. Thus a married individual can have a full life of dating and courting online, without ever telling the truth about his or her marital status; a picture posted could date from 20 years ago, or from a time when the poster was 20 pounds lighter! The profile one creates, whether on Facebook, on a dating site, or on a website, is a construction of how one wants to be seen by others online. Often this psychological liberation from reality is empowering in that it allows one to express the identity he or she would like to have, as opposed to how he or she really is. The value one places on the ability to communicate about one's identity is highly subjective. This idea was supported by research reported in a lead story in *The Atlantic* magazine titled "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?" in which journalist Stephen Marche reported on recent

research that emphasized the less empowering aspects of Facebook and other social networks:

> Social media – from Facebook to Twitter – have made us more densely networked than ever. Yet for all this connectivity, new research suggests that we have never been lonelier (or more narcissistic) – and that this loneliness is making us mentally and physically ill. (Marche, Marche, 2012, May, p. 60)

Cirucci (2013) has written persuasively about the concept of "first person paparazzi" in identity construction on Facebook, comparing it to the creation of an avatar in a video game. Claiming that online social networks like Facebook are highly influenced by contemporary celebrity culture, she writes:

> the end goal of Facebook is to become a hero … Like gossip column and celebrity blog writers, users post pictures of themselves doing embarrassing or mundane things and post stories about every move that they make. A part of their identity is defined by how many friends, or fans, they have. Interestingly then, in both forms of media, the users are defined only as far as the architecture of the medium supports them. Just as a WOW [World of Warcraft] avatar cannot leave the confines of the software that supports him, a Facebook user's profile cannot leave the confines of the site. These examples demonstrate a similarity between video games and social media. An important difference to note however is that while most gamers know that their avatar is only a representation of their "self," many social media users understand their online profiles to be almost perfect replicas of themselves. (Cirucci, 2013, p. 49)

Cirucci's sense of applying the personal cultural dynamics of celebrity culture to one's expression of identity is similar to Jenkins' (2006) and ties together the cultural realities of web theory, network theory, and systems theory. But what Cirucci perceives is that one's identity on Facebook (or on any other form of popular social networking) is a construct. Interacting with Facebook may be like a game, in that the user may think of it as real time and real activity, but in reality gaming and "unreality" enter into the picture. Through the use of social networks personal identity is shaped, in part, by the mechanisms of the architecture; but it is also shaped within the larger social and cultural spheres that contribute to how we think and develop personal values and national identity in our larger peer groups.

The final trope to discuss with regard to web theory, is the expression of gender and the role that gender plays in setting up social relationships that can be at once empowering and disempowering. In *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* – a collection of essays based on ethnographic studies of young people who are negotiating their own sense of self in a more socially networked society – Pascoe (2010) writes about young adults who negotiate intimate relationships in a world that encompasses more social media and who use the network to "meet other teens for friendship or dating" (p. 127). In negotiating same-sex relationships, social media can extend the potential for meeting, becoming friends, and having intimate relationships among "sexual minorities" (Pascoe, 2010, p. 127). In this case an

element of empowerment is apparent; but, once again, the duality of power and online actions can be both liberating and constricting.

Shade wrote about the liberating and yet also confining aspects of women's online spaces and shows how the users may not be conscious of the real consequences of these spaces:

> The palpable tension between the creation of women's spaces for purposes of activism and electronic democracy and the creation of women's communities by corporate and media behemoths who are only concerned with exploiting the commercial potential of women as an audience is evident on the Internet. (Shade, 2002, p. 9)

The aforementioned elements of web theory help us understand how the anonymity, narcissism, and gender issues of online social networks can be empowering as well as overpowering. The tropes of identity, narcissism, anonymity, and gender continue to affect the macro issues as well. However, it is essential to reiterate the importance of the unit of the messages of social networking – a digital form that privileges speed and (relatively) low-cost message production at the expense of understanding and interpreting the message. This aspect will be developed later in the analysis.

Macro Issues

The same issues of identity, especially how one presents oneself in online social networks, extends to the macro issues of empowerment as well; but, because the stakes for communication and action are so much higher, more attention has been paid to the macro issues, which will be discussed with reference to specific political and social group mobilization. The areas to be covered include the identities of the repressed, such as in the Zapatista Movement, the grassroots campaign in the US, MoveOn.org, and, finally, the aforementioned Arab Spring example of 2011, which has been heralded by some as marking the extraordinary empowerment of social networking (and of social media in general), while others have called it an aberration of empowerment. These specific case studies also bring into question Engles's concept of *false consciousness*, especially when compared to Pierre Lévy's ideas of collective intelligence (2001).

The Question of False Consciousness

False consciousness summarizes the Marxist thesis that the proletariat does not know, or rejects, the possibility of its ability to improve its own material conditions, while the upper class – the bourgeoisie – constructs means to keep the proletariat in its place. Over the years, false consciousness has become linked to the idea of cultural hegemony, and it is clearly articulated as such in the quotation reproduced above from Shade (2002) regarding corporate control over women's discourses online. Is social networking, then, something similar to the women's spaces online, created by

social groups for connecting to one another, even though they occupy a more formal "service," which monitors actions and controls architecture? When viewed through this lens, social networking can become even more of a corporate tool, or a service that provides a panoptic overview of what goes on between and among interactants.

Much has been made of the question of whether the Internet is indeed a public sphere (Habermas, 1962); in Habermas' original contention, it was a place that was free from both corporate and state power. But in a case like that of the Internet online communities or public interactions are often a combination of private and public sources of power. McLaine (2003, p. 234) has identified this use of the Internet as a "commodification of community."

Facebook has undergone a tremendous number of challenges in the way it protects users' privacy, either through loss of privacy while expanding its services (Calore, 2008) or through the architecture, which makes it difficult or impossible for a user to erase his or her own information (Cohen, 2008). Google's advertising strategy has also fallen out of favor for problems with click fraud and third-party sale of personal information to others (Mann, 2006). So in many instances, scratching the surface of the architecture leads us to consider false consciousness as a potential problem for any Internet or web use – but particularly when such use is sponsored by a social network that operates like a company or corporation for funding and growth.

But, having considered the real problems of architecture and of understanding the dynamics and theoretical issues behind social networking and empowerment, it is also important to balance these views with the act of empowerment that occurs when someone has a successful interaction online,and feels that he or she has been able to maximize the good features, while downplaying the bad. For the purpose of achieving such a balance, we should consider one more theoretical perspective: that of the idea of collective intelligence, which helps combine aspects of digital communication with social networking and Internet/web architecture for the eventual understanding of how meaning is ultimately created on or through social networking sites.

The Role of Collective Intelligence

Anthropologist Pierre Lévy describes collective intelligence as "a form of universally distributed intelligence, constantly enhanced, coordinated in real time, and resulting in the effective mobilization of skills" (2001, p. 13). This perspective suggests that, despite the actual interactions mediated by architecture and irrespective of any panoptic or bureaucratic intervention, the action of participating in a social network creates a belief system of its own. When collective intelligence is applied to social networking and empowerment, collective intelligence becomes an über-value; the actions transform real-world sociality into something different, and that difference can be empowering when compared to the static nature of real life. Lévy writes:

> In an intelligent community the specific objective is to permanently negotiate the order of things, language, the role of the individual, the identification and definition

> of objects, the reinterpretation of memory. Nothing is fixed. Yet, this does not result in a state of disorder or absolute relativism, for individual acts are coordinated and evaluated in real time, according to a large number of criteria that are themselves constantly reevaluated in context. (Lévy, 2001, p. 17)

Can false consciousness, then, also be seen, in contemporary light, to be similar to the new social dynamics of cyberlife/real life and to participation in a space where the mind must accept interactions based upon common sense, online skill, and personal need? This question leads us to consider the macro issues of social networking and empowerment.

The Zapatista Movement

One of the first social/political movements to use the Internet and raise awareness of current conditions was the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico, 1994. The Zapatistas – an indigenous group concerned about the marginalization of their way of life and the state-supported movement to take over their land in order to create space for participation in NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) – were one of the first groups to effectively use the Internet to spread their message to the world. They did so by using the then blossoming network of alternative news and online information systems that enabled them to control their own media image.

> the Zapatista uprising neatly crystallizes the changing nature of political action in an increasingly Internet-mediated, transnational environment. A grassroots movement that had been marginalized and was unable to gain access to the political elite and mainstream media both in Mexico and abroad was able to use the Internet to disseminate information about its plight. The Zapatistas were able to construct an elaborate, decentralized but influential global network of supporters, many of whom were mobilized to engage in acts of electronic and direct civil disobedience or could be persuades to lobby their own governments to take action at the international level. (Chadwick, 2005, p. 126)

On the surface, the Zappatista movement appears to have been empowered by its use of the Internet and by the way in which it was able to create an electronic soapbox so that the voices of those marginalized by the Mexican government could be heard. But, in reality, the exploitation of indigenous voices, coupled with the political interests of outside sympathizers who did the bulk of translation, posting, and public relations to support the movement while making their own political moves, shows how the indigenous people themselves may well have been victims of the intentions of outside supporters. In truth, the indigenous people themselves had little access to the Internet and the web, while supporters elsewhere did most of the online work to bring attention to the movement.

MoveOn.org

The organization MoveOn.org provides another example of a grassroots movement that had political impact. On the surface, MoveOn.org is a successful organization that mobilized people at the local level and then grew to take on a much more significant political purpose, to the point that the organization became an influential Washington DC public political action committee (PAC). In 1998 the online group was formed by a husband and wife team that felt the media had gone too far by vilifying President Clinton in the wake of the Monica Lewinsky scandal. The move to impeach the president and the media's obsession with the story angered Joan Blades and Wes Boyd, so the couple mounted an online petition to "move on" to other policy issues. Within the first month the number of signatories had grown to over a quarter of a million, and Washington politicians were amazed at the organizational power of the Internet.

In MoveOn.org, however, it is possible to see how an organization changes focus as it evolves. There is nothing inherently bad about this – in fact, we can assume this to be inevitable – but I use this example to particularly focus on how success often breeds new avenues that sometimes seem to undermine their original establishment. MoveOn now calls itself a "family of organizations" (http://www.moveon.org/about.html), but some of those organizations have been criticized for using "guerrilla tactics" (Harper, 2007). While in this case the original organizers of the group consciously intended at the outset – and succeeded – to empower citizens with a voice that might reach Congress, the ongoing success of the organization has resulted in the generation of polemics that invite criticism. Again, this is not necessarily negative, but it demonstrates the situated nature of empowerment over time and the inevitable evolution of any organization using the Internet and/or the web, as outside forces combine, challenge, interpret, and add to an organization's mission. As Lévy's *collective intelligence* concept indicates, outside social values and cultural forces act as lenses of interpretation over time. Language and intent take on new meanings as these macro examples evolve and devolve.

The Arab Spring

The final example of social networking as empowerment may be the one most focused upon by the popular press: the Arab Spring of 2011, which was the name given to the political unrest in the Middle East and North Africa. Starting in December 2010, political unrest in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya forced out leaders who had long held political power over their nations. Protests also broke out in Bahrain, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Sudan, and there were smaller uprisings in at least five other countries in the region (Lebanon, Mauritania, Oman, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia). While the economic, historic, and political reasons for these uprisings are complicated, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have been viewed as the empowering communication networks that have

allowed social organization to occur, particularly among youth. Added to the role of social networks is the attempt by the former governments of these nations to censor the Internet and the web as the conduit for subversive ideas and as a method for organizing different views. Hence social networks and the architecture of the global reach of the Internet and web are in the spotlight for empowering the opposition to overthrow long-held regimes. The seemingly transformational and liberating nature of these media is, then, often heralded as empowering the voices of opposition, and the media themselves are viewed as the backbone of social mobilization and change.

No doubt, attention has been focused on the growing number of young users of Facebook and Twitter in these regions, and the desire to link technology and change in a "cause/effect" manner has resulted in claims by many journalists that social networking has been the catalyst for social change, but the passage of time has allowed these tools to be viewed in a somewhat more analytical light. As Anissa Haddadi wrote in the *International Business Times*:

> While social networks undeniably plays [*sic*] a role in political, societal and economic developments in the Arab region, saying that it enabled the revolutions would go too far. Countries such as Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar are among the top countries using Twitter and Facebook in the region, but certainly not the most revolutionaries [*sic*]. Many of the people that [*sic*] set up Facebook pages for the Arab Spring were well known cyber activists in their country and rightly seized the opportunity to use those networks as tools. (Haddadi, 2011)

Traditional governments in many of these nations had exercised censorship over all forms of media and social organization for decades, even forbidding groups of people to organize in public places without a permit, as happened under the Mubarak government of Egypt. When they arrived, the Internet and the web were powerful forces of information and communicative exchange, inviting censorship, but architecturally allowing "work-arounds" in digital transmission of information – particularly over smaller devices like mobile telephones. One message of the Arab Spring is that any technological system, because it is architecture-based, can be hacked, or, in extreme cases, censored. This raises the question of whether social networks may have actually contributed to the state's knowledge of where demonstrations would be held and of who would be responsible for political organizing. While social networking may have expedited communication among those who had little power, state intervention could use these same tools for panoptic observation of the political organization and mobilization of groups, including military or police intervention. Effective censorship requires knowledge of how the architecture works and empowers governments with a unique surveillance tool.

The complicated social and political issues in the Arab nations combine far more components of change than the tools of social networking or the architecture of the Internet and web. Undoubtedly the images sent by cell phones and posted to

social networking sites have influenced the way the world has been able to see the personal violations, attacks, and emotional reactions to repressive actions, but these images are interpreted culturally. They may evoke sympathy, empathy, and a sense of the strife, but they were not the only tools used for engaging public support or creating internal change. And, as discussed, they could also be viewed as tools of surveillance and panoptic control.

It is also compelling to think that digitally transmitted information can have a certain "permanence" through community building; this may in fact be true, but we know that these types of messages cannot exist unless they are supported by various external factors. In the Arab nations, history, culture, economy, and religious beliefs also contribute to the means by which political mobilization and the need to find a community to support social change become cybernetically charged interactants in the shift from one system of power to another, or to multiple "others."

Micro and Macro Uses of Social Networks for Empowerment

Examining the micro and macro uses of social networks for empowerment through web theory, network theory, and systems theory allow us to investigate these issues by contextualizing them through cybernetic models. As in the case of the micro issues of personal empowerment, the tropes of web theory, for instance identity construction and exposition of anonymity, narcissism, and gender, filter aspects of personal empowerment and the subjective interpretation of power. In the macro uses of social networks, elements of time and space, more prevalent in network theory, help guide us toward understanding how the expressions of social and political mobilization change, once they are viewed through a more multicultural lens and as the architecture of the cybernetic system invites or repels different cultural interpretations. In both cases, however, systems theory reminds us that human and technological systems do not exist as single entities and that, together, they form a dynamic cybernetic system that works fluidly with the pressures of other values, institutions, and cultural systems.

These new theoretical perspectives contribute to models of how human and technological systems interact within a larger social and technological sphere, but they do not examine the political or cultural pressures that questions of false consciousness or collective intelligence afford. Do social networks have the capacity to create a false consciousness of empowerment? In both micro and macro examples, the answer is, undoubtedly, yes.

But what might be the empowering nature of collective intelligence? Perhaps one of Lévy's (2001) tenets is that the act of knowing, as exemplified in the concept of collective intelligence, explains a "continuous drift" (p. 249) of meaning that is influenced by the multidimensionality of the various forces that are momentarily or permanently "empowering."

Does the suggestion of a utopia of collective intelligence lead to the myth of progress, an advance toward a future that is always better? No, for the idea of linear progress assumes total control of the environment by the community. It assumes the permanence and uniformity of our criteria of choice (Lévy, 2001, p. 250).

Permanence in the age of social networking is unattainable. Because of the way we use social networking, every message is fixed in the moment, and the emotional power of the message is lost quickly over time, as more messages flood the pathways and are overtaken in the flow of "information." The ephemerality of the digital is the equalizer in terms of empowerment, because it situates power as fleeting and impermanent.

Social networking is no doubt an important component in empowering individuals, collectivities, and communities – but, while social networks constitute an interesting wedge by which to examine notions of personal or collective power, we need to see that this type of empowerment can only take place if supported by multiple agents in the process of change. Contemporary theories like web theory, network theory, and systems theory all help us understand the relationships between and among human users and technologies – particularly when examined from perspectives of architecture and control (including control by corporations, governments, and other institutions); but the empowerment of the individual is analogous to the power of digital communication, conveying a temporary or ephemeral way of knowing, unless the larger cybernetic system is constantly reinforced by multiple lenses of interpretation. Only then, over time, can we attempt to know or evaluate whether our consciousness has been changed by or through empowerment – or whether we fall into a false consciousness that eludes and deludes our true understanding of meaning.

Suggestions for Future Research

Ongoing inquiries into communication areas that blur formerly distinct avenues of inquiry, like "interpersonal" or "mass" communication, will undoubtedly continue to be challenged by new contexts. Increasingly, we are likely to see theories and models that have been applied to other disciplines (such as the cybernetic model presented in this chapter, originally intended to describe information flow in the field of engineering) being applied to these new contexts. As we move into explorations that involve multiple ways of thinking about these new situations, we will see new paradigms emerge, old theories tested, and new insights and understandings to consider.

At times, because we are examining new contexts, it may be tempting to throw out earlier concepts and perspectives, but in reality some of these ideas become richer over time. As our contexts grow in number, our understanding of ways of knowing should continue to deepen. As the speed of change – especially technological change – continues to accelerate, we should strive to find new ways of looking at fleeting situations from multiple perspectives and with an understanding of how we, as humans, make meaning in a more technology-rich world.

Notes

1 McLuhan used the "rear view mirror" concept to describe how we often see (and understand) messages from the past as though we were looking through the rear view mirror of a car; the mirror has distinct outlines and reflects only a portion of the reality we have traveled through. Therefore the rear view mirror delineates and limits how we see and understand the past, but it also gives a different perspective on how we view what we see in the mirror.

2 "Digital divide" was originally a phrase meant to describe the gulf between people who had access to technology and people who did not. Primarily an economic concept in those days, the digital divide suggested socioeconomic barriers to the use of technology. In contemporary times, the digital divide may still designate economic and opportunity disparity and class distinctions, but it can also suggest marginalization from the information age, or even resistance to the effects of living in a more technologically tied nation or global sphere.

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32

Global Communication Divides and Equal Rights to Communicate

Carolyn A. Lin

Introduction

Intrinsic to the foundation of a civil society is the people's right to communicate in a free and equal manner. This freedom and equal right to communicate can vary widely between cultures and across countries. As people's right to communicate is a function of the political, economic, and media systems inherent to their environment, cultural factors can also influence whether and how communication is conducted between individuals within the same society. When people from the same culture or society don't have an equal right to communicate, the political progress, social justice, and economic development of the country can suffer. By the same token, the impact of a lack of open communication discourse between peoples, societies, and countries can be a primary source of misapprehension and tension, which could over time lead to animosity, conflicts, and even wars.

Functional communication is a two-way process regardless of whether it takes place in a dyadic, small-group, organizational, or mass communication setting. The most influential form of communication in any society – to judge from the number of people it can reach and influence as well as from the wealth of symbolic interactions it can create – is that of mass communication. As technical advances associated with information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the past three decades have vastly broadened our ability to digitally transmit voice, data, and video in voluminous quantities, the Internet or the World Wide Web has also enabled us to expand the traditional noninteractive one-to-many mass communication modality to interactive one-to-may, many-to-one, and many-to-many modalities (e.g., Lin, 2003).

Regardless of the political system of a society or nation-state, mediated communication channels play a significant role in disseminating the types of information that

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can provide topics of communication discourse through their agenda-setting capability. In a country where citizens enjoy a high degree of freedom of speech or an equal right to communicate, lack of access to information essential to facilitate open communication tends to be caused by self-censorship imposed by the information sources themselves. By contrast, lack of access to information that should form the basis for open communication among citizens in a country with less freedom of speech or without an equal right to communicate is typically the outcome of censorship from the political system itself. In either case, gatekeepers hold the key to the credibility of the content as well as to the breadth and depth of information accessible to those citizens who wish to maintain or achieve their equal right to open communication.

Likewise, in economically developed countries, mediated communication channels can include traditional mass media (electronic and print media), Internet-based media, and telephony (including mobile communication), all of which complement each other and expand the reach of these channels 24/7 around the clock. In countries with developing economies, even though the range of mediated communication channels and access to information are relatively limited and less sophisticated, the influence of these channels is just as strong as, if not stronger than, that of their counterparts in economically developed countries. This is because a wider array of media channel choices tends to provide more diversely originated information and voices by comparison to fewer media channel options, which typically only supply a narrow set of views and less access to more widely sourced opinions and views (e.g., Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

In societies where, for cultural reasons, subgroups of citizens don't share equal rights to communicate, the effect of mediated communication channels is similarly strong, when compared to societies with subgroups of citizens who can communicate more freely. In the former scenario, where equal rights are lacking, mediated communication channels could be used to institutionalize cultural norms (including religious doctrines) through the power elites to ensure that individuals' rights to open communication is maintained. By comparison, in the scenario where all have equal rights to communication, mediated communication channels can become pipelines and megaphones for the creators of cultural content and/or for media elites to propagate certain political, economic, and/or social agendas (e.g., Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

In essence, the interactions of several forces – political, economic, and cultural – within a society can determine whether people from that society have sufficient freedom or equal rights to engage in free and open communication. When these forces work against people's rights to communicate, communication divides between different subgroups within a population will inevitably emerge. Such communication divides can be strongly ingrained in societies that formerly institutionalized the speech rights – and hence the civil rights – of different subgroups of people. As a result, short of a complete overhaul of a country's political structure, social conventions, and cultural traditions, these communication divides have little chance of being overturned.

At an international and global level, where the freedom and equal right to communicate is established across countries, similar communication divides can

also exist as the result of an imbalance in communication flows (e.g., Rodrigues, 2009). This imbalance is usually indicated by a geopolitical, economic, and/or military power hierarchy that permits the more powerful countries to dominate their weaker counterparts when it comes to communications flow between them. Generally, more economically developed countries or countries that have a more established media and information industry tend to play the role of dominant partners by exporting their cultural products or by controlling the information flow to those countries that are not competitive in this respect. This inequality in news, information, and media-content exchanges – which creates the communication divides between countries – carries strong implications for the impact of news and media effects on citizens internationally and globally.

A number of perspectives and communication theories have been applied to illustrate, analyze, and explain the phenomena presented above. Numerous debates between researchers from different scholarly traditions have also been forwarded to help us understand the meanings and impacts of these communication divides, whether they exist at a single society level, within an international context, or at the global level. These scholarly endeavors have significantly advanced our understanding of this domestic civil rights and global human rights issue over the past several decades in the communication discipline. To date, a large body of literature has addressed the influence of Internet technology on these different types of communication divides (e.g., Gunkel, 2003). Research on the role of mobile communication in the phenomenon of communication divides has also begun to emerge (e.g., Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003). Even so, most previous studies have not provided an integrated review of the different theoretical perspectives that address the issues of communication divides. Few studies have examined how the circumstances surrounding these communication divides may influence people's and societies' equal rights to communicate.

This chapter will provide a discussion of the major communication theories relevant to the issue of communication divides. The theoretical perspectives that will be discussed below are press theories (versus communication rights), media imperialism (versus communication independence), new world information order (versus imbalance), digital divide (versus information divide), and technology determinism (versus technology opportunity). The discussion will also present an analysis to demonstrate the conjoint points of these theoretical perspectives to generate a unique synthesis. This synthesis will attempt to integrate the communication divide issues linked to the functions of digital mediated communication to demonstrate how they may contribute to strengthen or weaken such divides.

Press Theories and Freedom of Speech

Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1963) provided the classic framework of the four theories of the press, which hypothesizes how different political systems may establish a media system that conforms with their special censorship agenda to control press freedom and hence the people's right to free speech. The four theories

classify the world's press systems under authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and totalitarian theories. These theories were products of the Cold War period and adequately explained the operational philosophies and practices of press systems from around the world during that period in history.

In particular, authoritarian theory describes press systems that exist in countries with capitalistic economies and a political dictator or an authoritarian government structure (e.g., non-communist developing countries). Libertarian theory explains press systems in which the press operation is typically commercialized, follows a libertarian philosophy, and submits to minimal censorship or government regulation (e.g., the United States). By contrast, social responsibility theory profiles press systems that enable a political structure (say, the parliament) to finance and have oversight over publicly owned electronic press operations (like radio and television) and make them follow a set of social responsibility regulations (e.g., Western European countries and Japan); a commercial media industry – including print and electronic media – may also be freely operated within this press system. The totalitarian theory of the press is a Soviet-style press system that practices systematic censorship and permits little to no press freedom. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, this particular press system remained in place in communist regimes such as Cuba and China.

Lin and Salwen (1986) revisited the four theories of the press and expanded its scope by proposing a tutelary theory of the press to describe how political systems can exercise alternative forms of control over the press by providing "tutelage" to its practices. They explicated the tutelary theory of the press as follows:

> Tutelary press systems function in governments that adhere to democratic principles but enforce authoritarian methods as "necessary evils." The tutelary concept was initially conceived within the context of the Nationalist Republic of China. The ROC considers itself 'at war' with the People's Republic of China. Under the 'state of emergency,' press controls are exercised. (Lin & Salwen, 1986, p. 361)

These authors validated the practicing principles of this tutelary press system via the coverage of the Sino–US normalization event in 1978–1979, by comparing this tutelary press system to the libertarian press system of the United States and to the totalitarian press system of the People's Republic of China (communist China).

The end of the Cold War in 1989, a watershed event, seemed to reinvigorate scholarly interest in an alternative view of press theories. Lee (1993) made one of the first attempts to reconceptualize the complex press systems into two theoretical models in the post-Soviet era (the Soviet Union was dissolved in December, 1991). Specifically, he hypothesized that the push toward capitalism and democracy will reshape the press systems into four types, on the basis of "the degree of capitalization in production and degree of emphasis on individual freedom vis-à-vis public interests" (pp. 196–197). These four types of press systems are: advanced liberal capitalism (e.g., the US and Western Europe), advanced social capitalism (e.g., Northern Europe and Australia), delayed liberal capitalism (e.g., India and Nigeria),

and delayed social capitalism (e.g., Eastern Europe) (Lee, 1993, pp. 196–197). The last two types – delayed liberal capitalism and delayed social capitalism – were developed to explain the press systems that have not yet reached the stage of full liberal capitalism or social capitalism. Lee further explained the development of these emerging press systems as follows: "In the 21st Century, authoritarianism, communism and developmentalism are all transitory forms in crisis periods… When society becomes stabilized, they will move towards either liberal capitalism or social capitalism" (1993, pp. 199–200).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) offered a comparative media system analysis that aptly categorizes the characteristics of the relationship between the press and the state. Their categorizations include: (1) a strong state role in a polarized pluralist model in the Mediterranean countries (e.g., France, Italy and Spain); (2) a liberal model with a strong public broadcasting service orientation (e.g., Britain); (3) a liberal model that regulates its commercial media industry (e.g., the US); (4) a social democratic corporatist model with a strong state role in protecting journalist freedom in Northern Europe (e.g., Norway); (5) a liberal democratic corporatist model with a strong state role in guarding the freedom of media companies (e.g., Germany).

Hallin and Mancini further commented:

> Commercialization seems clearly to involve significant de-differentiation of the media system in relation to the market, an erosion of the professional autonomy journalists gained in the later part of the twentieth century, and also possibly, a subordination of the media to the political interests of business that could diminish political balance in the representation of social interests. (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 295)

Other efforts to reconceptualize theories of the press tend to vary in their direction and scope. For instance, Ostini and Fung (2002) proposed considering the press systems and theories by incorporating the value systems of individual journalists and the state policy, instead of relying on the political or economic system. Yin (2008) compared the four theories of the press and a modified paradigm, which focuses on a four-dimension model – with the following four quadrants – free and responsible, free but not responsible, not free but responsible, not free and not responsible. This model was used to help explain press systems in the Eastern cultural contexts and in Western democratic conventions. The Eastern cultural context was highlighted by Confucius' philosophy of social hierarchy and respect for authority – which in turn influences journalistic ethics and the practice of self-censorship – irrespective of political structures and press systems.

These renewed theorizing efforts to update the press theories and to reflect the continuum of press freedom have yet to fully consider the role of citizen journalists or eye-witness reports enabled by the Internet and mobile communication. Personal digital communication technologies that allow individual citizens to report, share, and exchange first-person accounts of news and events also expand their rights to communicate. More importantly, these digital communication technologies might

have altered the dominance of the established press systems as the sole news and information sources, which also perform the gatekeeping functions as media elites for the power elites. The emergence of online government watchdog communities such as Wikileaks in the West and public communication forums such as Sina Weibo (the Chinese version of Twitter) in China are exemplary success stories for an expansion of free speech rights. In the case of Wikileaks and Sina Weibo, citizens across national boundaries are able to receive and share information as well as freely dialogue with each other outside of the established press systems by circumventing either formal or informal censorship measures.

These types of emerging and developing grassroots and commercial platforms for reporting and disseminating news and information via the Internet don't fall neatly into any previously defined press theory categories. But, when the mainstream media choose to report on the events or views shared on these free-flowing information platforms, these stories and opinions instantly become newsworthy and may potentially create an impact on the public's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. For instance, during the 2011 Iranian uprising, mainstream journalists often relied on the protesters who transmitted their microblogs, photos, and even videos related to the protest movement, through the use of a mobile phone to gather information for filing their own reports. The so-called "Arab Spring" of 2011 and 2012 best exemplifies this phenomenon. For example, CNN's coverage of the second wave of the Arab Spring – the Syrian uprising – aired videos shot by Syrian citizens who risked their lives to share their stories with the rest of the world (e.g., *AC360* of April 24, 2012 at http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/). Even though empirical research has begun to examine this Internet technology-driven communication phenomenon, the theoretical and social implications of this type of citizen journalism and punditry for people's rights to communicate freely and openly in different press and media systems remains unclear, owing to its newness.

Media Imperialism and Communication Independence

In the postcolonial era, the use of the term "imperialism" to describe the control of Western media industries in disseminating information and entertainment content that represents Western cultural values is largely reliable but not necessarily valid. The notion of Western media imperialism – which flows from the colonial model of economic and cultural domination – is not empirically valid, even though notions of imbalance in economic power ring true. This is because powerful nations and ex-colonial powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom can still have a cultural influence on selected countries – particularly those that rely on them for economic survival. But this dependence does not necessarily imply cultural domination.

The concept of media imperialism is closely related to the general theoretical framework of cultural imperialism, which underscores the assumption that center nations (Western) as opposed to periphery nations (non-Western) will control

the production and distribution of media products that transmit the center nations' political ideologies and cultural values to the periphery nations. By implication, this predominantly one-way media content transmission may enable the center nations to continue their political and economic domination of periphery nations through global media markets. As such, the issue of cultural domination or media imperialism is directly related to the equal right to communicate among citizens of a local culture that the Western cultures intend to overpower.

Salwen (1991) conducted an analysis of early work that addresses the media imperialism concept from the angle of a mass media effects approach, on the basis of the perspectives of major relevant mass communication theories. He concluded: "We can readily discard the broad claim that exposure to Western media alone will cause foreign peoples to shed their cultural identities and values and adopt Western values" (Salwen, 1991, p. 38). Salwen further noted that foreign (non-Western) audiences may readily adopt foreign (Western) attire and language, but not the fundamental cultural attitudes these represent; he also highlighted the potentially positive effects of foreign media exposure – for instance, exposure to the notion of women's liberation from male-dominated cultures. This critical review provides an interesting entry to querying how the much demonized "media imperialism" actually functions to influence cultures and society, whether such influences can be validated, and, if they are, what they mean to the local cultures and societies in empirical terms. More importantly, are all Western or outside influences necessarily negative or undesirable for a local culture? Could these influences also be positive or beneficial, by way of helping to facilitate certain desirable political, social, or cultural changes (e.g., free speech rights or women's rights) under the right circumstances?

Rogers (2006) made a distinction between the following concepts: cultural exchange (between cultures with similar levels of power), cultural dominance (imposed on a subculture that can invite resistance), cultural exploitation (from a dominant culture to a subordinate culture, without reciprocity) and transculturation (transmission via a hybrid of multiple cultures and global/transnational capitalism). The phenomenon of transculturation, which emphasizes the equal rights to communication for all, represents a practical cross-cultural communication modality. However, the lopsided communication traffic between the center nations that control the global media market and the periphery nations that import those media products renders the realization of this transculturation paradigm somewhat elusive. Specifically, the concept of transculturation

> still draws … from the domination–subordination model of cultural domination and exploitation while working to acknowledge complexities in culture, power, and appropriation that question the possibility (or desirability) of a (re)turn to cultural exchange … transculturation and its implied conception of culture question the validity of the assumptions embedded in the previous types, not just in the contemporary world but historically as well. (Rogers, 2006, p. 499)

History shows us that the reach of Western cultural supremacy tends to reflect the commercial success of entertainment products (e.g., music and films) and consumer goods (e.g., Coca Cola and McDonald's), instead of a systematic strategy to institute a substantive transformation of the cultural narratives and traditions of the natives. In an era where local, regional, and international economies are intertwined in a globalized marketplace, characterized by economic treaties sanctioned by such entities as the World Trade Organization, the export and import of communication and cultural products has become an international and global trade issue. As a result, industrialized countries, newly industrialized countries (e.g., South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), emerging markets (e.g., China, India and Brazil) and developing countries alike have begun to address the concern of "media imperialism" in trade balance, modernization, and cultural identity perspectives.

For instance, Su (2011) illustrated the intellectual debate about the impact of American film import on the survival of the Chinese film industry and identified the underlying ideological struggle of the Chinese elites in the context of national cultural identity and the modernization movement. In particular, Su suggested:

> If a foreign culture is well received by other nations, it must contain factors speaking to other nations' cultural consciousness and spirit … the successful diffusion of Hollywood culture worldwide lies in the common ground that this culture shares with other nations. (Su, 2011, p. 195)

She further concluded: "The entire debate is about the search … for a new national culture, national identity and Chinese alternative modernity in a rapidly globalized world" (p. 198). Su's thesis challenged the colonial connotation of media imperialism and considered Western films as communicating universal human values – albeit from a Western perspective – alongside the economic implications for the local film and cultural industries.

Likewise, other recent studies have also considered the media imperialism paradigm – which emphasizes the triumph of Western supremacy in controlling other nations' equal rights to communicate, freedom to preserve their national culture, or ability to maintain their national identity – as being less powerful than it was first thought to be. For instance, Rodrigues (2009) explained India's experience as a postcolonial culture that strives to utilize Western technologies and approaches to implement social and economic development programs, in order to achieve the type of success that is not tainted with undesirable Western influences. Specifically, he stated:

> Theorising the impact of foreign and private television in India since 1991 does not neatly fit into the old debates about one way flow of news and information as reflected in the demand for the New World Information and Communication Order in the 1970s and early 1980s. (Rodrigues, 2009, p. 1)

The Indian film industry is an example that defies the theoretical assumptions of media imperialism. Aside from producing local television programs that are now

the mainstay of the Indian television landscape, India is also known for the worldwide distribution of its film productions from Bollywood – an important Asian television/film industry counterpart of the Western powerhouse, Hollywood. According to Rodrigues, owing to its success, "the Indian television industry … in the past decade-and-a-half has grown sufficiently to potentially provide an outlet for diverse local expressions thereby revitalizing democracy in India" (p. 1). This Indian experience hence opens a window from which to peer into a positive phenomenon where the growth and development of the communication industry also became a facilitator for democracy, as citizens are afforded a free and open communication forum alongside the equal right to communicate.

By the same token, the rise of Nollywood – the African version of Hollywood – also stands in contrast to the concept of media imperialism, which symbolizes a postcolonial hegemonic residue. Nollywood, characterized by the dominance of Nigerian films, remains relatively untouched and unconnected to either Hollywood or audiences outside of the African continent. More importantly, Nollywood's large-scale success has been continued through an increasing reliance on the finance and distribution networks of regional satellite networks in South Africa and other nations on the continent. As such, the growth of Nollywood signals the rise of regional media corporations that integrate local, regional, and global capital to provide cultural and media products reflective of local and regional relevance (Adejunmobi, 2011).

Adejunmobi claimed that

> regional media corporations are more likely to move toward commodifying and standardizing the most financially profitable forms of local diversity available … the autonomy of Nollywood producers and directors could be partly or substantially undermined in the coming years … If this happens, it will be the work of regional media corporations rather than of global media corporations. (Adejunmobi, 2011, p. 77)

By implication, while Hollywood might still occupy a certain market share owing to its big-budget and high-quality productions with universal entertainment appeal, Nollywood owns the largest market share via the communication platform that it provides African citizens, enabling them to exercise their rights to cross the communication divides by freely expressing their cultural beliefs, values, and discourse.

By comparison to other notable cases, Latin America offers perhaps the most robust contrast to the presumptively ominous reach of media imperialism. Not unlike the successful Bollywood in India, telenovelas or Spanish-language soap operas that are tailored for local cultures are the cornerstone of the Latin American media entertainment enterprise. The popularity of telenovelas not only outpaces that of Hollywood-produced media entertainment in Latin America, it has also rivaled the popularity of Hollywood competition by gaining audience shares in Asia, Africa, and European regions (see, e.g., Rios & Castañeda, 2012). This local or regional origination paradigm, reflecting a reversal of the communication divide that could have been created by the Western media elites, has prompted scholars to question the contention of the media imperialism concept.

Straubhaar (2003), for instance, examines the directions and reach of the global flow of media products via shared cultural lineage, regional identity, and linguistic commonality in the age of satellite TV and the Internet. His analysis, stemming from the perspectives of dependency theory, world system theory, cultural imperialism, and media imperialism, provides a well-rounded overview of successful cross-cultural communication and profitable media product transfers – between peoples from close geographic regions – with shared histories and common language in Latin America. In essence, the media industries in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries and cultures have been adept at capitalizing on their citizens' desire for access to culturally relevant and linguistically compatible media content by producing and marketing regionally oriented media programming with a local flavor.

The same could be said about the Chinese-language media and entertainment products generated by the Hong Kong film industry, which serves the Chinese-speaking population across different countries and geographic regions. Similarly, Arabic-language media products – including television programs and films originating from Egypt – have been regarded as the communication and cultural platform for the Arabic-speaking populations around the world. It is worth noting that advances in (and the diffusion of) satellite and Internet technology have helped enable the international distribution of these locally and regionally produced and marketed communication and cultural products.

According to Fox and Waisbord (2002), the relationship between Western media conglomerates and Latin American media industries is a mutually and equally beneficial one. They suggest that, while the Western media corporations invest in the technology infrastructure, international distribution operations, and other valuable resources, regional media companies provide the communication and programming contents that are culturally relevant and have popular appeal for success. Straubhaar and Spencer (2006) similarly noted the same operational and collaborative patterns for these partnerships between global media titans and regional media networks in Latin America. They challenge the notion of a one-way information and communication flow from Western media giants to the rest of the regions in the world – a notion that is fundamental to the thesis of media imperialism.

The concept of a one-way information and communication flow is related to the underlying theme of media imperialism as well as to the notion of the world's information and communication order. As the umbrella assumptions of media imperialism have been debated in recent years, it would be useful to review the status of the new world information and communication order.

New World Information and Communication Order

The movement New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) could be considered a byproduct of the media imperialism paradigm. As the concept of media imperialism stems from the theoretical framework of cultural imperialism, the conception of NWICO has to do with dependency theory

(Straubhaar, 2003), which explains how developing countries heavily depend on media exporting countries for news, information, and communication content. While the concept of media imperialism carries with it an ideological concern about one culture dominating another for political and/or economic reasons, the concern of NWICO has more to do with the imbalance between countries that have the resources for information gathering and dissemination control and countries that do not have such resources.

Underlying this resource imbalance is the criticism associated with the potential political, economic, and cultural biases that may be embedded in the information gathering process and gatekeeping dynamics. Specifically, the handful of countries that provide the bulk of the news and information to the rest of the world – countries such as the US, the UK, and France – can also decide what the rest of the world may see, hear, or learn on the basis of their ideological leanings. Moreover, the resource imbalance between the countries that control the news and information flow and those that don't also creates a communication divide whereby citizens from countries that usually assume the information receiver's role don't have an equal right to contribute their input into this one-directional information flow.

To analyze this imbalanced information and communication order, it is worth reviewing the thesis of hegemony theory, which predicates the line between news, communication, and propaganda. The fundamental assumption of hegemony theory (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) is that the power elites in society have access to the media establishment in order to impose their views and will, and these views and will conform to their preferred political and economic agendas. In other words, the media establishment could frame the preferred view provided by the power elites in order to undermine the open communication forum and the equal rights of average citizens to communicate in both a domestic and an international context. The Iraq War coverage is a prime example where the American media establishment seems to have played the role of a "guard dog" for the power elites (the Bush administration) instead of being a "watchdog" for the American people, to protect people's right to know and their ability to communicate about the war in a free and equal manner (Lin, 2009).

Whether the news media choose to act as a watchdog or as a guard dog, they tend to control the information and communication flow by exercising their gatekeeping power through the dynamics of message framing and agenda setting. When the process of message framing takes place in the media, the message conveyed can be constructed (1) to emphasize or deemphasize certain facts: (2) to enhance or minimize the message valence; and/or (3) to include or exclude certain information. The results of such a framing exercise can have an influence on cultivating audience perceptions and attitudes toward the subjects, events, or people presented in the media. For example, Turan, Colakoglu, and Colakoglu (2009) examined how exposure of a Korean audience (an audience from a non-Western nation) to Western news media portrayals of Turkey (a developing country) may influence that audience's perceptions about Turkey. Their findings suggest that Korean audiences depended heavily on Western news media portrayals – which

reflected the Western media's cultural hegemony – for developing their perceptions of the Turkish culture and national image. Hence Western media's dominance over the news and information market – in conjunction with their ideologically inclined message-framing exercises – can influence the perceptions (e.g., stereotypes) and attitudes (e.g., prejudice and bias) of peoples form different nations toward each other.

The concept of an agenda-setting effect asserts that news media can influence their audiences to develop a belief about the saliency of certain news and of the events disseminated in the news and in media and information outlets. Combining the effects of agenda setting and message framing (which is considered a second-level agenda-setting effect), news media could help cultivate audience beliefs and attitudes that conform to the views of the media and/or power elites. For instance, in the case of the Iraq War, the agenda-setting effect was manifested in the importance of "rallying around the American flag." Dissenting opinion against the war was largely muted in the media. Likewise, the message-framing effect was reflected by how a majority of the American audience believed that the US invaded Iraq to fight the Al-Quaeda and that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center.

This preferred view of the Iraq War, conveyed and reinforced by the transnational American media conglomerates that have a dominant presence on the global media landscape, is rarely challenged by any other media organizations that lack a competitive presence. The Qatar-based Arabic-language broadcast news operation, Al Jazeera, represented the Arabic voice and did attempt to provide an alternative view on the Iraq War, from the Arab perspective. For instance, Al Jazeera presented the devastation and the civilian toll of the war, in contrast to the Western media's jingoistic approach and hegemonic view of the Iraq War. The Al Jazeera coverage was available only in Arabic, to audiences who had adequate satellite signal reception in the Middle East region. Without the worldwide information dissemination capability and networks of the Western media conglomerates, the Al Jazeera coverage of the Iraq War could not reach audiences beyond the Arab regions from around the world.

Imbalanced information flows notwithstanding, the movement of NWICO ultimately met its demise. This took place not long after its official inauguration via the presentation of the MacBride report in 1980, which recognized the concentration of media operations in the hands of the few as well as the unequal access to information and communication for many in the world (Gunaratne, 2009). The NWICO's demise was a result of the withdrawal of the UNESCO funding support from the US (1984) and UK (1985), in addition to its disagreement with the solutions proposed in the MacBride report for rectifying the uneven information and communication flow between nations of information "haves" and nations of information "have-nots" (both the US and UK later rejoined UNESCO in 2003 and 1997, respectively).

When Internet technology became accessible to the masses in a number of countries in the late 1990s, many believed that this free and open information

highway will be the true foundation and platform for free and open communication that will guarantee the equal right to communicate for all. The rise of the Internet age seems to make the rhetoric and debates surrounding the NWICO outdated, if not irrelevant. This irrational exuberance about the promise of the Internet – as the savior in all of our battles to gain equal rights to access information and communication – gradually subsided after the dawn of the twenty-first century. The reality that many people in developed economies (including the US) still do not have access to the Internet, or have limited access, began to set in. In the meantime, the commercial media establishment seized the Internet medium's limitless capacity for data transmission and turned cyberspace into the biggest virtual shopping mall of information, entertainment, consumer goods, and services, as well as into a commercialized communication platform.

As Internet access requires costly hardware and user fees for most people around the world, the issue of a communications divide in the new digital venue started to emerge and crystalize for policymakers and scholars alike. Consequently the question of citizens' equal right to communicate in a free and open forum regained traction, and this question has been framed in the context of technological digital divides. The issue of digital divides seems to take on a universal bent, as this perceived gap in access to the most important engine driving the digital information age and its knowledge economy – the Internet – exists in both the developed and underdeveloped nations alike.

To many, the arrival of the Internet era has in effect widened the information and knowledge gaps between the Internet "haves" and the Internet "have-nots." These gaps are far more difficult to bridge than the traditional gaps in information and knowledge between those who have access to electronic/print media and those who do not, due to the vast amount of information that one can access on the Internet by comparison to that of the conventional electronic/print media.

Digital Divides and Digital Communication Rights

The concept of origin of the digital divide had a multitude of roots instead of a single source. The phrase "digital divide" became widely circulated when the press and the policymakers in the Clinton administration routinely referenced a 1999 report – entitled *Falling through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide* – issued by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NITA, a branch of the US Department of Commerce). In the same year, Kofi Annan, the secretary general of the United Nations, in his speech given at the opening ceremony of the International Telecommunications Union (October 9, 1999), emphasized a digital divide between the information-rich and the information-poor as an addition to the already deep-rooted income gap between the rich and the poor. Annan's rhetoric helped shed light on the digital divide issue and acknowledged the sharp gap in telecommunication technological infrastructures between advanced and developing nations on the global stage.

According to Gunkel (2003), the concept of the digital divide originated from the belief in technological determinism, and this ideological orientation can overlook the fundamental complexity of the political, socioeconomic, and cultural issues associated with the phenomenon of digital technology diffusion. Gunkel further observed that

> the "digital divide" is originally and persistently plural … despite apparent variation in its referent, the digital divide is articulated in digital form … It represents its problematic according to a binary logic, dividing things into one of two types, where the one option is nominally defined as the negative or antithesis of the other. (Gunkel, 2003, pp. 505–506)

Fundamentally, the issues surrounding the digital divide concern the digital technology's "haves" and "have-nots," even though citizen access, adoption, and uses of digital technologies tend to reflect a continuum and cannot be easily defined in binary form. The most commonly referenced social and policy issues associated with our domestic concern about the digital divide are related to the gaps identified between (1) majority and minority populations; (2) the younger generations and the seniors; (3) nonrural and rural populations; and (4) the wealthier and the poor school districts. These social and policy issues can be found in a wide array of topics, ranging from access to news, information, and educational resources to government services. In essence, the discourse about the domestic digital divide between citizens is cast in socioeconomic terms and focuses on reducing the barriers for citizens to access the perceived benefits that a digital utopian universe could offer. As socioeconomic conditions are part of the preconditions for American citizens' ability to gain free and equal rights to communicate in the digital or "Internet superhighway," they are indeed central to the problems of the digital divide in the US.

Compared to the US domestic context, the digital divide problem at the international and global level is an outcome of media system, political infrastructure, and cultural factors in combination with socioeconomic conditions. Take the People's Republic of China, for example, where the digital divide between the wealthy and middle-class city-dwelling citizens who can afford to pay for digital communication access (including electricity, computers, smart phones, wireless networks, and Internet services) and their less fortunate counterparts is as extreme as day and night. This is because the vast majority of the Chinese population who reside in non-coastal regions, interior provinces, and rural areas remain far removed from gaining their digital communication rights in the near future.

Moreover, under a media system where the press is controlled by the central government and in a culture that does not emphasize drawing attention to individual rights, the digital divide issue does not tidily fall into a "haves versus have-nots" dichotomy. Drawing from Kincaid's (1987) analyses of Eastern versus Western communication cultures, Gunaratne (2009) observed that

> the Eastern perspective focuses on and motivates human action by an individual's participation in a collective institutional structure, which supersedes the individual and

> controls communication to that end; whereas the Western perspective focuses on and motivates human action by the individual's desire for political, social, and economic self-realization, and employs communication to that end. (Gunaratne, 2009, p. 373)

A similar digital divide phenomenon is also found in India, another Asian country that is inhabited by a flourishing information technology industry sector amid a vastly poverty-stricken population. When examining the gap between the digital haves and have-nots in India, Rao (2005, p. 362) maintained: "The fruits of IT sector yielded results only to most developed and computerized economies … the Internet blue chips, online shopping and nanosecond email have failed to cure century-old malaises, viz. illiteracy, poverty and unemployment in India." Rao further pointed out the additional technical factors that can be barriers to bridging the digital divide: (1) computer literacy; (2) use of electronic data interchange networks (e.g., e-commerce transactions); (3) use of technology savvy operations (e.g., automated teller machines); (4) use of information (between urbanites and the rural poor); and (5) working knowledge of English.

Indeed the Internet, or the digital communication platform, speaks primarily in English, and so are the operational definitions of the digital divide concept. This American conception of the digital divide again seems devoid of a cultural canvas capable of painting the human conditions outside of a Western technocrat-driven orientation. De Beer (2007) reminded us that the "divide" that truly matters is the human divide, as manifested in poverty, and the relief from poverty can only be attained through human knowledge; the barriers to acquiring this essential human knowledge are embedded in ideological policies, educational approaches, and even the information and communication technologies adopted, among other things. De Beer further punctuated the question about the digital divide in Africa as follows:

> This divide is digital … a technical electronic divide – the emphasis is not on the humanness of the divide …The assumption is that access is good; as if it stands to reason that everybody wants access or even needs access, and knows what to do with what is accessible. (De Beer, 2007, p. 200)

By and large, other scholars and commentators who examined the digital divide concern in Africa were in agreement with de Beer's sentiment. For instance, Fuchs and Horak (2008) suggest that the lack of capital investment in infrastructure and societal development initiatives to accommodate and take advantage of any technology transfer programs will not help bridge the digital divide between developed nations, which thrive in knowledge economies, and African nations, which are mired in human divide burdens. Specifically, these authors shared the following reminders:

> The digital divide is a problem for Africa that is due to structural inequalities of the global network society which is a society characterized by global social and digital apartheid. The global digital divide means unequal material, usage, skills, benefit, and

> institutional access to new information and communication technologies by different world regions … The global digital divide is an expression of the unequal geography of global capitalism. That there is a lack of economic and technological resources in Africa is not the fault of corrupt African governments and not an effect of bad governance, market protectionism, a lack of investment conditions for Western capital, etc., but the effect of hundreds of years of colonial and post-colonial exploitation, exclusion, and dependency of the Third World that has caused the very conditions that Africans have to face today. (Fuchs & Horak, 2008, p. 115)

The ICT access barriers cited above are more real than theoretical in the case of developing countries. If citizens in these developing countries lack the resources and skills to access digital media technologies, they have few means to become acquainted with and to develop an interest in adopting and using these technologies. When Nicholas Negroponte's Massachusetts Institute of Technology team created the $100 laptop computers (via the One Laptop per Child initiative) and asked governments from developing countries to purchase them for school children, skeptics questioned the effectiveness of adopting such a rudimentary computer system to eradicate the challenge of the lack of a national technology infrastructure (the XO laptop now costs $200). Likewise, Fuchs and Horak (2008) suggested that an approach that defies a market-based model – via advanced free laptops loaded with free software and access to open-source technologies in developing countries – holds promise for confronting and reducing the global digital divide created by the colonial past and the postcolonial present.

Fuchs and Horak (2008) presented their observations and arguments above by drawing on Van Dijk and Hacker's (2003) work, which succinctly articulates a system perspective on the digital divide phenomenon. In particular, Van Dijk and Hacker suggested the following types of access barriers that can help contribute to a digital divide between people and societies:

1 Lack of any digital experience caused by lack of interest, computer fear and unattractiveness of the new technology ("psychological access");
2 No possession of computers and network connections ("material access");
3 Lack of digital skills caused by insufficient user-friendliness and inadequate education or social support ("skills access");
4 Lack of significant usage opportunities ("usage access"). (Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003, p. 1)

Hence an initiative to exercise digital rights liberation may not necessarily hasten the process of diffusion of innovations, or even guarantee that it takes place as anticipated. As perceived observability, trialability, complexity, compatibility, and relative advantage of an innovation are important factors for making adoption decisions (per Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovations paradigm), so are adoption motivations, social characteristics and normative usage of the innovation, and other media systems variables (e.g., government regulations and market dynamics) (Lin, 2003). For instance, having access to an email system does not ensure an

individual's digital right to communicate, unless a critical mass of email users is interconnected to support such two-way communication.

The belief that a global digital divide can be bridged by a technological solution based on a social and economic development model is inherent to the ideology of technology determinism. This "if you built it, they will come" idealism does not necessarily take into consideration a communication divide that is fundamental to a human divide. Hence the debate between the proponents and the opponents of this ideological paradigm remains unabated.

Technological Determinism and Technology Opportunity

The concept of technological determinism is predicated on the proposition that technologies – including media, information, and communication modalities – are the primary engines that drive economic growth, social change, democracy, and modernization in society. Past work published by Alvin Toffler, Herbert Schiller, Jay David Bolter, Nicholas Negroponte, and others strongly advocates the belief that technology determines the social and economic outcomes of society. Critics of the technological determinism model consider its reductionist approach, which assumes a direct link between technological innovations and positive change in society, to be devoid of a number of important mediating factors such as the existing political system, technology infrastructure, and other sociocultural factors. Despite such criticism, the technological determinism paradigm has enjoyed enduring popularity among governmental policymakers, technology developers, and market capitalists, who are the drivers of the technocultural and digitization trend that aims at turning all people into digital citizens. Not surprisingly, the ideology of technological determinism will lead us to believe that ICTs are the solution for bridging the gap between those who have equal rights to communicate and those who don't, if we simply provide them with the necessary tools for improving their social and economic conditions.

Historical evidence, however, has proven otherwise. As a case in point, the widespread adoption of communication and media technologies such as telegraph and terrestrial radio did not necessarily help expand citizens' right to communicate, narrow the income gaps, or increase political democratization between people and societies, as anticipated. In the current digital communication era, the promise of the Internet as a revolutionary force that can transform a nation's communication culture, educational achievement, economic growth, and civic involvement also seems to have fallen short of the digital utopian expectations. In particular, the Internet has become the most frequently used communication medium and the largest shopping mall in many parts of the world; it has also taken on the role of mass entertainer by providing a wide variety of entertainment options, ranging from music to videogames and everything else imaginable. However, ordinary citizens from wealthy countries that boast a burgeoning knowledge economy are

not necessarily better informed, nor are they engaged in the type of discourse that will advance social change. In fact the reading, writing, science, and math skills of American children have been declining instead of improving in this celebrated ICT age, and the income gap between the rich and the poor has also widened greatly.

Social determinism is generally considered an alternative to technological determinism for explaining the relationship between technology and social change. This mode of thought emphasizes the importance of political, economic, social, and cultural factors as the principal guiding force for creating change in society instead of technology. If we consider the example of the $200 laptop computers that were purchased by governments and distributed to school children in these countries, it seems clear that these laptop computers have not generated the type of social change originally anticipated. Proponents of social determinism would remind us that the persistent poverty level plaguing these children has a much stronger effect on determining their economic opportunities than their access to those $200 laptops.

Others have chosen to bypass these two opposing deterministic views and to focus on finding a middle ground to illustrate how the motivating forces for social change are functioning on a more flexible continuum. For instance, Gunkel describes two types of deterministic models but does not view them as being mutually exclusive:

> Hard determinism makes technology the sufficient or necessary condition for social change, while soft determinism understands technology to be a key factor that may facilitate change. Although these two modes are distinguished from one another, the boundary between them is often blurry and flexible. (Gunkel, 2003, p. 510)

While the issues associated with technologically driven social change – including utilizing ICTs to advance a free and open communication forum as well as equal right to communicate – are highly complex in a domestic setting, this complexity is multiplied several-fold at the global level. Arguably the ability of technological determinism, social determinism, or the hard/soft determinism paradigm to fully explain such complexity can vary. By the same token, these different theoretical perspectives may not be able to fully account for whether and why ICTs would fail or become successful in helping to advance communication freedom, which is fundamental to social change and a democratic society.

Hence it is useful to conceptualize communication rights in relation to ICTs as a multidimensional concept that rests on a continuum of access to technology, sociocultural conventions, economic equity, and political democratization. Combined, these elements can help determine whether, why, and how certain technologies will be developed, adopted, and used to produce a set of cultural and socioeconomic outcomes that interact in a reciprocal manner to advance or deter communication rights. In essence, ICTs can offer governments, societies, and their citizens the best opportunities to build a free and open communication platform to permit their citizens to exercise their equal right to communicate.

A *technology opportunity model* (or TOM) is hence introduced here to capture the essence of this non-deterministic view of the relations between ICTs, social change, and communication rights. This proposed typology, conceptualized on the basis of the *interactive communication technology adoption model* developed by Lin (2003), does not emphasize any a priori criteria to predict the cause and effect of social change, nor does it favor a particular aspect of technology or socially based argument. Instead it views ICT development, diffusion, and uses, as well as the social outcomes of ICT use, from a social scientific perspective, one that takes into consideration the interactions between individual, institutional, and system factors in a dynamic manner. A change in any of these factors in the model (Lin, 2003, pp. 346–346) – including system, technology, audience (or individuals), social, use, and adoption factors – can influence the dynamics between all of the factors in the model so as to determine relative success or failure in advancing the communication freedom and rights of individuals in the system. Hence TOM is not a deterministically inclined paradigm characterized by the "-ism" suffix; it advocates a return to the roots approach – starting with the individuals in society – to carefully examine the issues related to ICT and individual communication rights.

Conclusion

The thesis proposed by TOM treats an individual's right to communicate as an equally important component in the equation of social, cultural, political, and technological change in a society. This type of non-ideological and non-doctrinary approach to conceptualize, analyze, measure, and evaluate the intricate phenomena of social change and communication rights encourages an empirical and social scientific approach, one that studies these human conditions on the basis of a stochastic instead of a deterministic model. The theoretical rationale for proposing TOM then echoes de Beer's (2007) reasoning, which apprises that the so-called digital divide is in fact a human divide for all intents and purposes.

From the perspective of TOM, digital information and communication technologies have narrowed the communication distance but widened the information gap between peoples and societies. Nonetheless, information is not knowledge, as the former contains the data/content transmitted and the latter exemplifies the cognitively processed/retained human intelligence. Thus, in order to bring down the barriers imposed by communication divides as a condition for human divides, it would be useful to view culture as a fluid social concept and the development of a shared communication culture between peoples and societies as a precondition for bringing down the barriers imposed by such divides. In other words, it would be productive to overlook that the Internet primarily speaks English. Without a commonly known language to be used for communication, there is no easy way or opportunity to bridge the communication divides between peoples and societies. The Arab numerals, the Julian calendar, and even the metric system have been

embraced by the human community for as long as we can remember, regardless of cultural and linguistic differences.

In sum, each of the different but interconnected theoretical frameworks discussed above –press theories, media imperialism, new world information and communicator order, digital divide, and technology determinism – has a bearing on creating, maintaining, and/or dissolving the communication divide between peoples and societies. The counter-arguments, the empirical queries, or the alternative theoretical perspective – forwarded in association with each of these theoretical frameworks in this chapter – thus represent a useful starting point for a discourse that stems from both a social scientific and a humanistic orientation. As suggested by the proposed technology opportunity model, ICTs provide the best opportunities for the human community to bridge the communication divide by expressing itself and sharing its cultures through communication and discourse. It is the responsibility of the human community to capitalize on the humanness and humanity of its members in order to reduce the communication divide and the human divide, when opportunities knock.

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33

Citizenship and Consumption
Media Theory in the Age of Twitter

Kevin Cummings and Cynthia Gottshall

Early theories of mass communication formulate the communication process by placing a heavy emphasis on production and transmission. In so doing, these approaches over-emphasize message design logics to the exclusion of theorizing how meaning and agency might exist within the register of message reception. Two influential approaches to the study of the mass media in this early period came from the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1994) and from engineering and mathematics (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). The former, originally published in 1944, offers a dismal assessment of the public as the victim or the dupe of a pernicious culture industry; the latter seeks an objective means to measure information transfers through a mathematical mapping of communication. Each approach entails a paradigmatic reading of the communicative encounter, wherein the audience is positioned as the receiver of information. In the work of Horkheimer and Adorno, the audience becomes a participant in its own deception. In the Shannon–Weaver model, the receiver of a message can become a sender; but, because the model deals with signal systems rather than meaning, the approach has limited utility for theorizing about human relationships or for showing ways for receivers of messages to contest hegemonic apparatuses. In what follows we provide a brief review of each approach before considering the work of Stuart Hall, who inaugurated a critical approach to media studies that understands communication as a constitutive practice.

Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno's essay "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," published in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, presents a dark and desolate meditation on the mass media. The culture industry is understood to have a near-hypnotic effect on an unwitting audience, and production serves to bind a helpless public to the degree that its members "succumb

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to whatever is proffered to them" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1994, p. 106). The model of communication suggests a public invested in the very conditions of subordination: "They insist unwaveringly on the ideology by which they are enslaved" (p. 106). While Horkheimer and Adorno provide a valuable cautionary narrative about the seductive appeal of the entertainment industry, the framing of communication as overdetermined by the producers positions the audience as bereft of, or at least severely limited in, agency.

Adorno would later write about complicity between consumers and the culture industry in harsh and pessimistic terms:

> The phrase, the world wants to be deceived, has become truer than had ever been intended. People are not only, as the saying goes, falling for the swindle; if it guarantees them even the most fleeting gratification they desire a deception which is nonetheless transparent to them. They force their eyes shut and voice approval, in a kind of self-loathing, for what is meted out to them, knowing fully the purpose for which it is manufactured. (Adorno, 1991, p. 103)

While some aspects of this description of the problem resonate with us, the all-pervasive articulation of media influence underestimates potentialities for resistance. For Adorno, the consumer is not a subject but "an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery" (p. 99). Analyzing communication from this vantage point unmasks the hegemonic influence of the industry while undertheorizing and underestimating the capacity of citizens within the body politic to engage in democratic movements of subversion.

Inasmuch as the model of communication envisioned by Horkheimer and Adorno positioned the audience as either a dupe or an accomplice of the culture industry, the Shannon–Weaver model, in contrast, eschews the subject of agency altogether. In 1948 Claude Shannon developed a preliminary information transfer model of communication, which he published in the *Bell System Technical Journal* under the title "A Mathematical Theory of Communication." His work was further elaborated upon by Warren Weaver through the addition of feedback loops. The collaboration that followed was published as *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). The Shannon–Weaver model of communication born from this collaboration frames all human interaction as an algorithm. The scheme consists of a sender and a receiver: the sender – or encoder – transmits information – or data – to the receiver, who must decode these data. Information passes through a channel and the transmission may be muffled or incomplete due to noise. The Shannon–Weaver model has been important in media theorizing because it provides a basic framework for mapping the sending and the receiving of messages. What can be confusing is that, on this model, messages are understood solely in terms of information. If we recall that the model specifically privileges the engineering aspects of communication over the semantic aspects, the insignificance of the specific content becomes obvious. Messages filled with meaning and messages of nonsense are identical with respect to what counts as

information. From an engineering perspective, the information is represented as a logarithm of available choices, and thus the semantic content is irrelevant (Shannon & Weaver, 1949, pp. 4–5). If one adds a feedback loop, the apparent passivity of the receiver is diminished. That is, receivers can now participate in the model by becoming senders of feedback. Nevertheless, the positioning of meaning as subservient or irrelevant makes this quantitative approach to information transfer more useful for empirical analyses of information processing and less useful for understanding culture and intersubjectivity.

In an essay titled "Encoding/Decoding," Stuart Hall challenges earlier approaches – which map communication as a linear relationship – by reimagining media interactions as a complex circuit of linked articulations where production, circulation, distribution/consumption, and reproduction exist as an apparatus of discursive forms (Hall, 1980, p. 128). What makes this approach interesting and unique is the work done to theorize the subject positions that become available in various strategies of decoding. Hall works through three hypothetical positions that a consumer of television discourse might occupy when considering information-based commodities. The first position is described as the "*dominant–hegemonic position*," and individuals who decode meaning from this position embrace the dominant hegemonic interpretations of events (p. 136). Paralleling the approach advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno, this position operates from the twin assumptions that a hegemonic viewpoint in the media "defines within its terms the mental horizon, the universe, of possible meanings" and "carries with it the stamp of legitimacy" (p. 137). A second position for message reception comes in the form of a "*negotiated code*" that privileges the hegemonic order at the macro level but allows for resistance in micro or local events. A third position is possible where a viewer reads a text in a contrary or oppositional way, which Hall identifies as an "*oppositional code*" (p. 138). In this position, the viewer can engage in a struggle over discourse where she subverts the preferred or dominant interpretation. It is in this moment that the "struggle in discourse – is joined."

Theories of production play an important role in our knowledge of mediated communication as a tool for creating and sustaining hegemonic understandings of events. Where communicative practices include a heavy emphasis on production, the possibilities for a democratic space to emerge and challenge dominant interests are limited. If the members of the audience are positioned as spectators, their capacities to act meaningfully are lessened. In contrast, a model of communication that allows subject positions for the viewer beyond that of mere spectator or voyeur has the possibility to create and sustain democratic spaces where dominant interests can be challenged by minority perspectives. By exploring consumption and considering the audience as an active part of a struggle over meaning, Stuart Hall began a shift toward communication as a constitutive practice where the ownership of media commodities is dispersed across the public rather than being nested in corporate conglomerates.

Major changes in the ways we theorize about production and consumption have been accompanied by tectonic shifts in the media landscape itself. Where once

newspapers, radio, and television were a trio of juggernauts dominating information dissemination, today those media are no longer in ascension. As they fade or become displaced and redefined by new media with a range of affective dimensions and interactive possibilities, the terrain continues to change. In what follows we briefly trace the ongoing metamorphosis of the media landscape. Our review of dynamic alterations in media platforms will accompany consideration of Twitter as a new kind of medium, where participants attain a level of participation previously unseen. We work through several examples of Twitter use to highlight the ways in which Twitter can engage in democratic politics – but to also encourage continued vigilance on the part of media theorists about the ways in which media that encourage greater public activity can still be used to further anti-democratic policies and programs. While we are somewhat optimistic about public engagement, Twitter is not a panacea, and we close with a discussion of citizenship and democracy designed to explain why elevated participation and access to institutions and mechanisms for mass distribution of ideas do not serve to guarantee democratic habits or critical reflection on public dilemmas. This informs our reimagining of the communication circuit.

The Changing Terrain

The advent of the Internet, other electronic media, blogs, and social media platforms changed not only the media landscape, but also the way in which news and information are disseminated among the public. During the second half of the twentieth century people turned to newspapers or the "big three" broadcast networks – ABC (American Broadcasting Corporation), NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation), and CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) – for their news. Moreover, audiences were consuming their news at set times in the early evening and late at night. As cable broadcasting developed, a market for niche channels emerged, and in 1980 Cable News Network (CNN) was launched as the first 24-hour news service with the goal of covering stories in greater depth and of focusing on live and breaking news coverage. Critics were skeptical not only about the profitability of a 24-hour news service but also whether there was an audience for daily all-day news coverage. CNN's live coverage of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 marked CNN's arrival as a worldwide news service, as it was the only news channel that was able to broadcast from inside Iraq during the beginning hours of the Coalition bombing of Baghdad. The immediacy and intimacy of CNN's coverage helped to redefine how people consumed their news. Historically, audiences had consumed their news at regularly scheduled times, in the evening or late at night. If a big story broke, the broadcast networks would break into their regularly scheduled programming, but one had to be near a television in order to receive that news live. CNN's and other cable news outlets' around-the-clock coverage of the news, and their being there on the scene for those breaking events, amplified the audience's desire to have that instantaneous access. Cable's advantage was its

immediacy, and audience members reported that they would turn to cable channels first in the event of a big news story, whether it concerned politics, health, or sports (Pew Research Center, 1998, p. 3).

This change in the audience's mode of consumption fell in line with how media theorists were envisioning the audience. Dennis McQuail, media studies scholar, described the changing conception of media audience this way:

> In the early days of mass communication research, the audience concept stood for the body of actual or intended receivers of messages at the end of a linear process of information transmission. This version has been gradually replaced by a view of the media receiver as more or less active, resistant to influence, and guided by his or her own concerns, depending on the particular social and cultural context. (McQuail, 1997, p. 142)

The audience's active role became even more amplified as the digital environment came to dominate the media landscape in the later part of the twentieth century.

As the 1991 Persian Gulf War became a pivotal moment for CNN's role in the audience's consumption of news, the events of September 11, 2001 helped to shape how audiences acquired their news and information from the web. On 9/11, if people were near a television set, they tuned to the major news outlets, cable or broadcast, to find out what was happening. If a television was not available, people turned to the Internet, trying to get news updates from major news sites. The events of 9/11 and the ensuing war on terrorism had an impact on how Americans followed the news. A Pew Research Center report in 2001 found the following:

> Americans are following the news more closely than they were before Sept. 11, and cable networks such as CNN, MSNBC and Fox News Channel are their first choice for news about terrorist attacks and the war on terrorism. But cable is not the only source Americans are relying upon … 35% get their news from the Internet. (Pew Research Center, 2001, p. 11)

In the days that followed the attacks of 9/11 the web increased as a source of spreading news, as people began to turn to it for news and information. The Pew Research Center report found that cable was the top source of news for all Americans, but that the young predominantly used the Internet (p. 12).

The impact is not just on how or where people acquire their news; it is also on how people function in relationship to the news. As people move online, the concept of the audience as news consumers has evolved into recognition of the audience as prosumers. This concept captures a situation where citizens function simultaneously as consumers, editors, and producers of a new kind of news, in which journalistic accounts are but one element.

The digital environment has changed the media audiences' behavior as the array of media choices available has exploded. People are spending more time with news than ever before, and the Internet is becoming an important media platform for fulfilling news and information needs. In September 2010 the Pew Research

Center reported that 57 percent of Americans regularly get news from at least one Internet or digital source (Pew Research Center, 2010, p. 28). Furthermore, when it comes to the platform of choice for consumers, the digital environment is the one media platform that has seen audience growth. The Internet is now the third most popular news platform: it is behind local and national television news but ahead of radio and print newspapers (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Olmstead, 2010, p. 2).

The digital environment includes a rather broad new grouping of websites and networks, loosely referred to as social media, which have emerged to challenge ideas about what media are, how they operate, how they impact society, and how audiences consume them. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter may have begun as places where one would connect with friends and create private diversions, but today those social media are being identified as platforms that offer ordinary citizens the opportunity to both enter and influence many aspects of public life. Purcell et al. found this:

> Some 37% of internet users have contributed to the creation of news, commentary about it, or dissemination of news via social media. They have done at least one of the following: commenting on a news story (25%); posting a link on a social networking site (17%); tagging content (11%), creating their own original news material or opinion piece (9%), or Tweeting about news (3%). (2010, p. 4)

Twitter, a microblogging or social networking platform launched in 2006, has both mass communication and interpersonal communication features. Its first users answered the prompt "What are you doing?" with 140-character messages. In answering that prompt, early users tweeted about their everyday experiences, viewed updates from other users, and they would send a public reply or a private direct message to connect with other Twitter users. People use Twitter to give and receive advice, to meet people, to gather and share information through links to other web sites, and to link news stories. The original prompt "What are you doing?" has been modified into "What's happening?" – reflecting that Twitter has moved beyond being a social network site to being a platform that provides real-time accounts from people who are in the middle of a newsworthy event, crisis, or natural disaster.

As the American media have changed, the global media landscape has also undergone metamorphosis since the 1960s. The advent of new information and communication technologies such as satellites and the Internet in the long period from the 1960s through the 1990s has created a new global media environment. The changing world media landscape means that in the twenty-first century there is increased access to information and ideas from a diverse range of sources, but particularly from the Internet. Internet usage statistics indicate that, by December 2011, 32.7 percent of the world's population had access to the Internet. By geographic region, this percentage was further analyzed as follows: 61.3 percent of Europe, 67.5 percent of Oceania/Australia, 35.6 percent of the Middle East, and 26.2 percent of Asia had access to the Internet (Internet World Stats, 2011).

So far, blogging and tweeting were crucial in the political events in Moldova, North Africa, and the Middle East in early part of the twenty-first century. Several major events show how Twitter has been a useful tool for activists working toward democratic reform. The role of Twitter is also apparent in social and cultural controversies, and in the next sections we take up the subject of anti-democratic and democratic movements and events where Twitter has had a prominent influence. Our analysis begins with anti-democratic uses, and then we take up the examples where Twitter has functioned to catalyze democratic movements.

Public Communication

The role of Twitter in social relations is still being determined. While Twitter may provide important moments for democratic organizing, meme dissemination, and public participation, the technology can also serve patently anti-democratic interests. This occurs in part because Twitter is a tool that can be strategically deployed by elites as well as by the masses. Limitations on the size and number of characters permitted in tweets may also be a major obstacle to sustained public dialogue. Much of what happens on Twitter involves celebrities and public figures providing micro commentary on their lives and the events around them. Public involvement is often limited, individuals reading tweets as a slightly faster paced tabloid or producing tweets as part of a public diary of one's own life. Our assessment of the role of Twitter in redefining the media landscape begins with consideration of some of the critiques and examples that reveal anti-democratic moments in Twitter use.

In work on the cognitive mindset of the mass media, David Zarefsky argues that the American political scene is hampered by a dysfunctional focus on trivialities to the expense of serious public argument (Zarefsky, 1992, p. 411). Zarefsky maintains that our focus on soundbites and on the presentation of events as momentary and unstable has led to an eclipsing of public argument (p. 414). Noam Chomsky (2010) echoes this worry about the development of a soundbite culture and raises concerns about Twitter in a recent interview with *Figure/Ground*:

> It requires a very brief, concise form of thought and so on that tends toward superficiality and draws people away from real serious communication – which requires knowing the other person, knowing what the other person is thinking about, thinking yourself of what you want to talk about, etc. It is not a medium of a serious interchange.

For Chomsky, what appears to be notably absent from Twitter exchanges is both the depth of the reasoning involved and knowledge of other participants. While access is markedly increased, the possibilities for deliberation seem limited by a medium where the total count for a post is 140 characters. While we hold Chomsky in high regard, we do worry about the use of appellations such as "real" or "serious" in a discussion of a new medium for sharing information.

What counts as real and serious is subject to debate. Twitter is a new kind of communication, sometimes quite harmful to democratic projects and other times quite promising.

Our cursory review of how Twitter is utilized globally uncovers a variety of examples of groups and individuals using this medium to stage democratic moments, to assemble, and to raise a collective voice against repressive regimes. Nevertheless, there is some reason to be concerned that Twitter might become part of a blueprint for the reassertion of a *dominant hegemonic position*, as articulated by Stuart Hall. McClelland writes: "Although many Twitter users conduct interpersonal communication, millions more follow elite groups"; and he further notes that the top individuals whom others follow on the microblogging service are celebrities like Ashton Kutcher, Lady Gaga, Ellen Degeneres, Taylor Swift, and Oprah Winfrey (McClelland, 2011, p. 8–9). This suggests that, for many, Twitter is a sort of rapidly updated tabloid system that allows the public a more intimate glimpse into the everyday lives of famous superstars. Through the tweets of these superstars, we can voyeuristically observe their interpersonal relationships and get an impression of how Hollywood icons live their lives. Where Twitter serves as a news service by providing immediate coverage of tsunamis, earthquakes, and protests, the tweets do allow for a far more rapid and mobile transmission of information. But, in many cases, this primarily serves to amplify already existing coverage of a news event by news media. Coupled with this news coverage of dramatic global events are stories about celebrities and their lives and deaths. When our students know more about Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston than they do about their senators and government representatives, we ought to question whether democratic moments can ever occur without a broad change in society and the body politic. Twitter might have the potential to enfranchise users, but the probability also exists that this technology will simply become another tool in the arsenal of media monopolies bent on providing news that entertains an audience to create greater advertising revenues.

Tracing some of the ways in which corporations have colonized Twitter can assist in making a judgment about the democratic potential of this new media technology. Advertising has already become prominent on Twitter through product placement and actual advertisements. Roger Ebert, for instance, describes in detail his use of Twitter, Facebook, and his blog to capitalize on Amazon's commission for sales policy. This allowed Ebert to post links to items for sale on Amazon and then receive a portion of the proceeds for each purchase made by an individual who connected through his link feed. Ebert is no longer an Amazon associate, in part because of a change in Illinois law regarding the taxation of online sales that led to Amazon discontinuing its associates program in that state. The discontinuation was at least in part felicitous, as Ebert wrote about his feeling that the sales were "undignified," although he did seem delighted by the idea of making money and by the "frenzy of salesmanship" (Ebert, 2011). As corporations and advertisers find creative ways to pollinate Twitter for the purpose of increasing sales and of increasing alignment with their brand, it is difficult to

maintain that Twitter functions as a bottom-up device of the multitude that challenges dominant voices. Instead, Twitter appears to be the same kind of top-down system of information dissemination whereby information brokers transmit their messages through a new channel to eager masses in search of information and entertainment.

The amplification of existing platforms provides preliminary examples of how the media functions top down. There are also explicitly anti-democratic programs of surveillance that have emerged, which involve the direct use of tweets from the bottom up. In Venezuela, Hugo Chavez opened a Twitter account in 2010 and took aim at political opponents, announcing: "My Twitter account is open for you to denounce them" (Margolis, 2010, p. 6). Describing the Internet as a "battle trench," Chavez asked followers to "use social networking sites to combat opponents, especially students who use Facebook and other sites to organize protests against the government" (Carroll, 2010). Whether we are ideologically aligned with the left or the right, the Orwellian call of a political leader to monitor and report on dissidents is abhorrent. Twitter allows for far greater levels of public participation, but there is no reason to believe that this participation will always, or even on balance, aim to promote democratic ends. Often our judgments of this new media platform will depend on how it is used, rather than emerging directly from the form of technology. The suggestion that a technology that functions bottom up will necessarily be more democratic is problematic. The masses are just as capable of surveillance and control as the elites.

The concerns introduced by Noam Chomsky and David Zarefsky are certainly vindicated in these examples. Limitations of the technology can preclude sustained analysis of issues. To a degree, the superficiality critique is mitigated by the way Twitter works to aggregate links and provide entry points into longer works on the Internet. Twitter becomes more meaningful, figuratively and literally, when appraised as one part or piece of a broader system of social media. At the level of how technology can emancipate or constrain populations, Twitter remains in our judgment in a sort of limbo and, as use is increased, we will be able to follow how the technology organizes *topoi* of discussion and moves public sentiments. Regimes such as Iran and Syria are beginning to utilize social networking sites, and their use of the technology for social control will provide fertile ground for considering whether a bottom-up technology can be used to resist dominant interests or whether the technology is easily absorbed into existing systems of control in a way that envelops opposition.

Before we turn our attention to counter-narratives that illustrate how Twitter has become part of democratic moments, it is useful to briefly discuss Twitter as a technology to specifically work through the claims Chomsky advanced about the superficiality of social networking. Nathan Jurgenson (2011) offers a defense of Twitter, noting that many disadvantaged groups make extensive use of the Internet. Activists around the world deploy social media to organize and coalesce. Digital communication is no longer the sole purview of an affluent

bourgeoisie. Jurgenson argues that, ultimately, we should judge Twitter on how it is used:

> Yes, any individual tweet might be superficial, but a stream of tweets from a political confrontation like Tahrir Square, a war zone like Gaza or a list of carefully selected thinkers makes for a collection of expression that is anything but shallow. Social media is [*sic*] like radio: It all depends on how you tune it.

Noam Chomsky's aforementioned claim that Twitter "is not a medium of serious interchange" highlights limitations in human interactions that inhere in a chirographic technology where character count is so limited. If Twitter gives the public access to information about the lives of celebrities, we might pause to wonder whether the hypermediated realm we have entered into comes at the expense of face-to-face encounters. Can Twitter help an individual connect meaningfully with someone else, or does this technology create more distance and space between people? Our argument is that a technology that facilitates a human-to-human interface can become a space along which democracy can travel.

Democratic Moments

While technology may be an imperfect substitute for face-to-face encounters, mediated messages can reach far larger audiences, and Twitter opens a space for the mass dissemination of ideas to individuals who once would have had far less access to them. Equally importantly, Twitter can drive public sentiment and organize public anger, sympathy, joy, and fear. In many cases, Twitter allows a person to have a sense of membership and identity. Public sentiments can be mobilized in support of democracy, but such sentiments can also serve a repressive politics to the detriment of democratic activity. What makes Twitter unique is that it provides a new milieu where access to the ability to transmit ideas is shared across much greater demographics. In the forthcoming examples we explore some of the ways in which Twitter has created spaces for democratic causes and ideals to move through. Our purpose is not to glamorize Twitter or to suggest that in all or most cases Twitter brings people together. Treating Twitter as a fetish for democracy would be a profound mistake indeed. Rather our aim is to explore how Twitter has occasionally been put in the service of democratic movements. Ideally, this will begin a project of discovering how social media can cultivate the public good. If Twitter can help us gesture or move toward democracy and provide a new means for increasing access and participation, then it can become an important resource in activism.

To explicate the role Twitter plays in democratic organizing, we review a variety of international examples, along with one that is largely situated within the United States. Our American example is somewhat unusual in that it offers a fertile counter-narrative that helps us contest the idea that Twitter precludes the development of relationships and limits the ability of participants to truly get to know others. While interpersonal

relationships are certainly hard to build and sustain through 140 character messages, Twitter does expand an individual's interpersonal orbit into a more public realm. In the specific case of the It Gets Better project, participants have utilized Twitter to provide public affirmation for teens who have sexual identities outside or at the periphery of the dominant heterosexual matrix. By creating a space for affirmation, It Gets Better proves to be a valuable resource for connecting strangers, especially ones who live in communities rife with prejudice against LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer) individuals. Given the epidemic of suicides in the young LGBTQ community, the need for social and relational support is strong and Twitter has become one resource among many for citizens to make public their support for teenagers struggling to fit in. The very public nature of Twitter, instead of collapsing the space for meaningful connection, provides a public venue for a huge network of support, ranging from affirmation to links to broader support networks.

The It Gets Better campaign began when sex columnist Dan Savage and his partner Terry Miller created a You Tube video to help teenagers facing harassment and bullying (www.itgetsbetter.org). The primary strategy of the It Gets Better campaign is a sharing of videos and stories that let youth know that they are not alone and that life gets better. For teens contemplating suicide, the campaign includes links to the Trevor hotline, which offers free telephone counseling. Twitter is another important resource used in the campaign, and as of March, 2012 It Gets Better has more than 53,000 followers.

While media such as the video and the telephone provide a more intimate connection, there is also an intensity that comes from connecting through Twitter. When citizens gather within a larger commons to protest a dominant culture that harasses and bullies, that seems to us to be the very epitome of what Stuart Hall suggests constitutes an *oppositional code*. For Hall, the constitutive practice of challenging the dominant order involves new reading and writing practices where the existing order is re-conceptualized. By reading challenges to the heterosexual matrix and writing about better pathways into the future, the It Gets Better project becomes an important anthem for youth, where the promise of a better future is an important refrain and raises hopes for an end to prejudice. It is not the technology per se that democratizes. Twitter can be used for harassment or bullying. But, when the technology is deployed by a community to create a public signal of affirmation, this allows for the creation of a moment where democracy can coalesce. As oppositional codes are created and circulated, the media become less organized around ruling interests that control information transmission and more organized around a public that can exercise influence through its own message production and circulation. In short, a new model of communication is emerging and, while a bottom-up approach does not guarantee democratic participation, it would seem to be an entry condition for a democratic politics for the mass media.

This new model of communication is also on display in a variety of significant recent geopolitical events. Blogging and tweeting have been crucial in the political events in Northern Africa, Moldova, and the Middle East in the early part of the twenty-first century. Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, is a small nation that

gained its independence following the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Moldova's transition to democracy confronted a series of obstacles, as the country continued to face substantial domestic social and economic problems. By 2001 Moldova welcomed the return of the communists to a majority in the parliament and to the presidency. Over the next eight years, with the communists in power, the country remained desperately poor, under harsh economic conditions.

On April 5, 2009 parliamentary elections were held in which the communists won 50 percent of the vote. This enabled them not only to hold the majority in the parliament but also to elect a new president. These events were a catalyst for young people to protest. On Monday, April 6 two youth movements began calling for people to rally. The young people began to organize their demonstrations by enlisting text messaging, Facebook, and Twitter. The youth created their own searchable tag on Twitter, #pman, which stands for Piaţa Marii Adunări Nationale (Great National Assembly Square), the Romanian name for the biggest square in Chişinău, Moldova's capital (Morozov, 2009a). Within a 48-hour period after the election results were announced, the tag became one of the most popular discussions on Twitter. The youth turned to the street to protest and to Twitter to raise awareness about the planned protests. By Tuesday, April 7 the protests grew from 10,000 to 30,000 young Moldovans rallying at Election Headquarters, picketing the president's residence and other government buildings, and storming the building of the Moldovan Parliament (Morozov, 2009a). At that moment Twitter was the catalyst for social protests that accelerated the speed and intensity of the demonstrations. Not only was the technology important in facilitating the protests; Moldovans who had moved to Europe for work were able to follow the events via Twitter. Authorities ultimately turned off cellphone coverage from the protest area; however, protesters would leave the central square in order to post Twitter updates via mobile phones. Most of the Twitters were in Romanian, and a few in English. One English-language Twitter post that provided details of the protests for the outside world, particularly foreign journalists, was this: "in #pman a grenade thrown by the police has torn apart one of the protestor's leg." Twitter dynamically enabled protesters to communicate with one another and to broadcast these communications to anyone who would listen. Twitter also allowed individuals to provide information for news media outlets, enabling the distribution of relevant information to the media as long as the feeds were open. In April 2009 it was too early to tell whether the revolution would be successful; however, it was evident "that Twitter … and other social media played a role in mobilizing (and, even more so, reporting on) the protests" (Morozov, 2009a).

Twitter made this protest visible. As Evgeny Morozov blogged, the fact that a small number of protesters who used Twitter

> managed to keep the entire global Twittersphere discussing an obscure country for almost a week only proves that Twitter has more power than we think. That only 80 users have blown this story out of any proportion to me looks like the clearest indication that our public sphere is getting democratized. (Morozov, 2009b)

Social media have also played a role in other uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. The use of new communication technologies to organize political protests is not a new phenomenon. Social media can communicate instantaneously, without the limitations of a publication deadline or the demands of broadcast news time slots. That characteristic helps to clarify the speed at which these protests have emerged, as the uprisings have been organized in part by activists using new social media platforms. Youth also have adapted quickly to this new platform.

The protesters used the tools to organize meetings, to attract people to the protests, or to keep their followers inside and outside of the country abreast of what was happening. The speed at which the protesters were able to tweet about events as they unfolded surpassed that of the traditional media. Examples of those tweets from Libya are:

> #Libya ambasddor [*sic*] in #India just called #BBCArabic and resigned [*sic*] for the mass crimes against ppl in Libya, tweeted @Abdulla_AlAthba
>
> URGENT | #Libya | Confirmed | Fallen of Libyan TV 2 and the Libyan Jamahiriya FM into the hands of demonstrators. Source R.S.S.
>
> The gaddafi posters in the heart of tripoli, that have been there before I was even born, are now being burnt :).. #libya #feb17 came from ChangeInLibya Libyan Dude
>
> (SOURCE: Thewrap.com 2011)

These Twitter feeds from Iran demonstrate Twitter's use in eyewitness accounts, as a means to spread announcements, or by way of warning.

These tweets are from @persiankiwi Twitter stream:

> pedestrians avoid military baraks [*sic*] off Pasdaran St – something is going to happen from there (15, June 1:06 p.m.)
>
> anyone with camera or laptop is attacked in street (16 June 12:02 a.m.)
>
> just in from Baharestan Sq – situation today is terrible – they beat ppls like animals (24 June, 6:34 a.m.)
>
> (SOURCE: Alexanian, 2011, p. 433)

This next set of tweets is from @Change_For_Iran Twitter stream:

> they were waiting for us – they all have guns and riot uniforms – it was like a mouse trap (24 June, 6:53 a.m.)
>
> confirmed – tomorrow Haft Teer Sq at 4 pm pro mousavi\freedom – carry flowers for baseej – no confrontation (16 June, 11:40 a.m.)
>
> (SOURCE: Alexanian, 2011, p. 433)

These tweets are from @MOUSAVI1388 Twitter stream:

> Next peaceful protest, Tomorrow (05 Aug.) 9am, Baharestan Sq. in front of parliament (4 August, 7:24a.m.)
>
> URGNT@ ALL jornlsts, Tday 15:30 Prss Conf. in Tehran, Sadr MotrWay, Kave Shomali Blvd., Roshanayi St, Bahar Shomali St. Num. 9 (16 June, 2:31a.m.)
>
> (SOURCE: Alexanian, 2011, p. 433)

The speed of circulation has proven to be an important element in the social media. Platforms such as Twitter enabled users to challenge official government accounts with eyewitness reports. Twitter users were able to send out bits of information that would not have made it to the mainstream media. Some Twitter users also became adept at evading the crackdown on communication that has occurred in a number of political uprisings. Jonathan Zittrain, a Harvard Law School professor and expert on the Internet, said: "Twitter was particularly resilient to censorship because it had so many ways for its posts to originate – from a phone, a Web browser or specialized applications – and so many outlets for those posts to appear" (Zittrain, quoted in Stone & Cohen, 2009, June 16). This ability to communicate at such a rapid speed has proven powerful in giving marginalized groups a voice. Additionally, there is an element of mobility at play. The ability to reposition in response to moves by other actors and the portability of mobile devices allowed for message circulation even under extreme duress. The usual silencing tactics are proving far less effective than in the past and the voices of dissents are much more difficult to stifle.

Citizens and Consumers

Mediated communication has been framed in models of communication in uneven ways for quite some time, because elites have largely controlled access to what kinds of stories are followed and to how those narratives are presented. The explosion of Twitter accompanies a transition in media studies toward a new model of communicative encounters, where analysis is focused on an entire communicative circuit. While Twitter can be used for anti-democratic purposes and projects, this new technology increases access and participation in parts of the communicative circuit that were once held under strict control by media elites. So, while Twitter does not guarantee an increase in democratic thinking or action, the ability to publicly disseminate information is a prerequisite for democracy. Twitter expands the public means to produce and share information. Our argument is that access and participation to the means of production are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for democratic movements. When the means of production are held by a few power brokers, it is hard for democracy to flourish. When broad swathes of the population can invent and circulate narratives and arguments, democracy becomes possible. If the public can use technology to assemble together to deliberate, then a democratic movement can emerge.

Citizenship is important both for how we conceive of the model of communication and as a trope or figure that animates a democracy. In the work of Horkheimer and

Adorno, citizens are pawns who unwittingly participate in their own deception. In the work of Shannon and Weaver, citizens are nodes that information is sent to and transmitted from. Stuart Hall reconfigures the model of communication to incorporate a full circuit, and in many ways this reveals a topography where communication can be traced or mapped as a constitutive practice. Because an audience is no longer confined to the role of passive reception, individuals can assume the space of citizenship and can engage in critiques of institutions. In addition to new modes of consumption, individuals can also produce and circulate ideas, and this reshapes the communication circuit.

Our theoretical accounts of communication turn on the question of the kind of citizen we envision. When citizens are pawns easily seduced by authoritarian personalities, our conception of the figure who dissents is that of an emaciated and lackluster individual. Drawing from the work of speech scholar Elwood Murray, Darrin Hicks argues that a new kind of citizen can be produced, who bears the rhetorical attributes necessary for the management of political and cultural conflicts (Hicks, 2007, p. 358). Central to this citizen is a commitment to the habits of democratic self-reflection and to the ability to both cooperate and dissent (p. 360). Democracy and citizenship require more than new technological edifices. Access and participation are preconditions to it. But a new mode of citizenship requires a set of convictions and dispositions that go beyond just a critique of dominant structures. The move to tear down fascism is an entry point for democratic practices, but history is replete with examples of fascist modes of governance emerging from the ashes of a revolution. On a parallel track, it is equally disconcerting that new forms of access to the media may produce spectators who consume uncritically and somewhat pathologically the stories of the lives of celebrities while remaining distanced and divorced from the social conditions of the surrounding world.

Creating an investment in democracy and in democratic deliberations entails a commitment to a particular approach to managing disagreement. Following the work of Chantal Mouffe, Hicks maintains that citizens must begin to accumulate the resources necessary to channel passions and convictions into argumentative engagements (Hicks, 2002, p. 254). In the context of struggles with despots and tyrants, the possibilities for deliberation may be limited or foreclosed. Deliberations in the latter case may of necessity be postponed while the public assembles and engages in the struggle for freedom. In the aftermath, rather than enemies and adversaries being constructed, there is a moment when the possibility for a new democratic project emerges; and it is in that moment that a new kind of citizen can begin the work of constructing spaces where dialogue and argument may come to coexist. Hicks argues:

> It is precisely the transformative potential immanent in political controversy, the potential to make incommensurability the engine of innovation, and the potential for agonistic debate to transform self-interested participants into public-spirited actors that makes it so valuable for theories of deliberative democracy. (Hicks, 2002, p. 256)

Movement toward democratic engagement through argument and dialogue requires much more that technological apparatuses. The new platforms for social movements provide an important resource, but to create and sustain a democratic ethos takes a particular kind of public and a citizen committed to a set of democratic practices. The constitutive practices of communication made explicit by Stuart Hall involve new strategies of reading and decoding messages as *oppositional codes*. These strategies are accompanied by new methods for coding messages within the communication circuit. The addition of the rhetorical dimension of citizenship repositions democracy as a central component in the communicative encounter.

Twitter is an important platform for disenfranchised groups to speak from. The voice of dissent now travels much more rapidly and is a good bit more difficult to censor or silence. Our methods of theorizing about mass communication should follow the evolution of new media technologies and platforms. Stuart Hall's work on the communication circuit has put into motion a new method of theorizing about the relationships between producers and consumers of media. The addition of the consumer as citizen brings into focus the ways Hall's new model of communication could be used to imagine social relations that foster and galvanize democratic politics.

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34

Round Pegs in Square Holes
Is Mass Communication Theory a Useful Tool in Conducting Internet Research?

Christine Ogan

I received my doctorate from the University of North Carolina, in mass communication research. The name of that program remains. When I was enrolled as a student in that program, my classmates and I could tick off the names of the mass media on our fingers and were sure that our research would pertain to the several print or broadcast media existing at the time. There was no doubt about the definition of mass communication. That was in the 1970s. Most university schools and colleges of journalism in the twenty-first century continue to include the phrase "mass communication" in their names. However, today many people question the viability of the mass media, some even calling them irrelevant in the context of user-generated content, social media, and Web 2.0 and 3.0 (the semantic web) on the Internet.

In part, mass media education may be under attack because it trains students to work in professions that are undergoing radical changes in the delivery of products, the definition of the work itself, and the need for a broader range of skills in those who wish to enter the field. At the graduate level, however, courses focus more on theory and its application to that field. Perhaps that is why many academics trained to be mass communication researchers continue to be conflicted about which theories are applicable to the new media environment and how theory that formerly applied to the legacy media (that is, the traditional, pre-electronic media) might still be useful. Building new theory that incorporates Internet-based media is also a challenge.

In 1996, an early date in the development of the Internet, Merrill Morris and I published an article that appeared both in the online *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* and the print version of the *Journal of Communication* making an

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argument for considering the "Internet as Mass Medium" (Morris & Ogan, 1996). In the introduction to that essay, we made the following claim:

> This paper argues that if mass communications researchers continue to largely disregard the research potential of the Internet, their theories about communication will become less useful. Not only will the discipline be left behind, it will also miss an opportunity to explore and rethink answers to some of the central questions of mass communications research, questions that go to the heart of the model of source–message–receiver with which the field has struggled. This paper proposes a conceptualization of the Internet as a mass medium, based on revised ideas of what constitutes a mass audience and a mediating technology. The computer as a new communication technology opens a space for scholars to rethink assumptions and categories, and perhaps even to find new insights into traditional communication technologies. (Morris & Ogan, 1996, p. 39)

Those words were written at a time when the Internet was yet to be truly interactive and when the messages were largely still being constructed and distributed in a one-to-many environment, though the producers of messages already included a range of people not professionally trained as journalists or mass communicators. Recently Napoli (2010) has suggested, as we did, that the concept of "mass" needs readdressing in light of the changing role of the audience in an Internet age. Like some other scholars (Beer & Burrows, 2007; Fonio et al., 2007), he argues that "audience" should now include both senders and receivers of information and that the "term 'mass communication' is inherently flexible to satisfactorily account for the dynamics of the contemporary media environment" (Napoli, 2010, p. 506). Following a summary discussion of several scholars' contribution to define the concept of mass communication in a variety of ways, Napoli argues that it wasn't such a radical departure for users to become producers of content in the new media era; rather the idea that they became distributors of content to the masses, bringing about as it did a diminished role for institutional communicators, was what made Internet audiences different (p. 509). Napoli goes on to describe how the work of the audience has changed in the Web 2.0 environment:

> not only are audiences contributing content that can be monetized by content providers, but it is also increasingly the case that audiences engage in the work of the advertisers and marketers who traditionally support these content providers. Audiences today assist with the marketing of products in a variety of ways, ranging from producing commercials to engaging in online word-of-mouth endorsements, to integrating brand messages into their own communication platforms. (p. 512)

I would agree with Napoli that a more flexible definition of mass communication, one that incorporates the various capabilities of today's Internet, is called for. In this chapter I will focus on the theories of mass communication and on how they have been used over the last decades to conceptualize, describe, and measure Internet communication in a mass communication frame. As part of

that research, I have conducted a meta-analysis of the theories that have been applied to so-called "new media" (now not so very new) in the literature of several mainstream communication journals over a 10-year period, from 2000 to 2009. Although such an analysis cannot put to rest the question of whether the Internet is a mass medium, it will illustrate how communication researchers have viewed the Internet in their publications and perhaps will begin to show scholars the way forward.

Study of the Internet With a Communication Theory Focus

In the same volume of research articles about the place of the Internet in communication research in which the Morris and Ogan article appeared, Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996) engaged in a dialogue about the Internet's defining characteristics, among other topics. Rafaeli started the discussion by pointing out what he saw as important: sensory appeal, lack of linearity, lack of an organizing principle, elastic synchronicity, and interactivity. Agreeing with the points about architectural difference, Newhagen added digitization to the list. The two acknowledged that communication on the Internet merited our attention because it was a new medium and a vehicle for delivering mass media. While Newhagen focused on effects research on the Internet, Rafaeli was more interested in the uses and gratifications (U&G) approach. They concurred that communication scholars ought to be extremely interested in studying the Internet. Almost a decade later, Walther, Gay, and Hancock (2005) asked again how communication researchers should study the Internet. Though their answer focused more on interpersonal than on mass communication, the authors noted that "surprisingly little theoretical novelty" could be found in the 10 years of research they examined, and that "few authentically new theories can be said truly to represent the phenomena of the field" (p. 649). They criticized researchers for focusing on the Internet as a single medium rather than on multiple media and said that, in addition to there being no new theory to define the field, scholars also had not drawn on traditional theories that compared medium to medium sufficiently. Even when we have done so, Walther and colleagues (2005) said, the Internet characteristics have not been sufficiently explicated.

Drawing on his own research on media and learning, Eveland (2003) proposed that in our media effects paradigm we had failed to discuss what it was about mass media that produced those effects. We had focused on "content effects theories" rather than, or instead of, media effects theory – and that focus had led us to use a lot of cognitive models that didn't distinguish our research from that of psychologists, because we didn't take into account the attributes of the medium in question, that is, television or the Internet (Eveland, 2003, p. 400). His approach was to use what he called a "mix of attributes." Although he made no claim to creating an exhaustive list, Eveland's attributes included

interactivity (following Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996), organization or structure, control provided to the user, channel, textuality, and content. When we focus on attributes across media, including the Internet or in combination with the Internet, we will find that each medium has more or less of these attributes; and, to the extent that each attribute exists, the effects might vary. Seeing these attributes on a continuum, as variables, would allow researchers to examine media effects related to the Internet through the same lens that is used for broadcast or print media, and this would result in a merging of mass communication theory and new media or Internet-based theory.

Though we offered that observation in 1996, we didn't work through the details found in Eveland's analysis. He held that such an approach would eliminate the need to invent new theories for the Internet, as if one had to start from scratch when newer media or applications appeared on the scene, and instead "allow researchers to devote their effort to more inclusive and general theories of media effects" (Eveland, 2003, p. 407). It may be that these attributes only apply to effects theory related to news media on the web, for that was the focus of study, but Eveland concluded that this type of categorization of attributes might also be useful to researchers whose focus is not communication effects theory. Subsequently, neither Eveland nor any other researchers have investigated that possibility.

Categorizing Communication Theories in Publications

At least three meta-analyses of communication theories have been published over the years. The first such study was conducted by Anderson in 1996. He examined seven major books devoted to the description of theories in the field, unearthing a total of 249 distinct theories and finding that only 22 percent of this total appeared in more than one of the books. This study included more than mass communication theory, but it is an indicator of the lack of consensus on the identification of significant theories. In 2003, Kamhawi and Weaver conducted a content analysis of research appearing in 10 major communication journals over 20 years. The general lack of theory in these articles was their most important finding, as only 30 percent of studies had any theoretical foundation. The same lack of consensus that Anderson discovered was also a finding in this study. Very few theoretical approaches appeared in more than 10 articles in the 20 years. Bryant and Miron (2004) took a longer view in their probability sample of three communication journals published from 1956 to 2000, where they examined theory. In this study, only 32 percent of the articles included any theory at all, while 59 percent made reference to communication theory. In 48 percent of the articles where theory appeared, the theory served as mere references to other studies. In 26 percent, theory served as a framework for the study, while the rest compared, critiqued, proposed, supported, or tested those theories.

Summing up these studies, then, the lack of consensus in the use of theory applied to traditional mass media leads us to believe that, when similar research on the use of theory is applied to the Internet as a medium, a similar problem will occur.

Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) cited three theories most frequently mentioned in their meta-analysis: information processing (16 percent), U&G (12 percent), and media construction of social reality (10 percent). In the period from 1980 to 1999, Kamhawi and Weaver found only 17 articles (1.9 percent) that were devoted to the Internet. Virtually none appeared before 1990, and the period from 1995 to 1999 inexplicably included half as many articles (6.7 percent) as those recorded between 1990 and 1994 (14.9 percent).

In the 45-year period examined by Bryant and Miron's analysis of articles appearing in the *Journal of Communication*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, and *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, the most frequently cited theories or paradigms were U&G (61), tied with agenda setting (61), followed by cultivation (56), Marxism (34), social learning (34), diffusion (24), McLuhan's sense extension (23), Piagetian theory (19), and cybernetics systems theory (18) (Bryant & Miron, 2004, p. 673). A total of only 26 theories were used in more than 10 articles. Bryant and Miron's study did not classify the articles by area of mass communication or new media, however.

A final example of analysis of communication research focused on communication effects theories and on the models used in studies of those effects over a 50-year period beginning in 1956 (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2009). The authors analyzed the citation patterns across five communication journals, focusing on the 200 most frequently cited papers. After creating theoretical clusters, they named the most significant models and the years during which they were most often cited and came up with the following list: persuasion models (1944–1963), active audience models (1944–1963), social context models (1955–1983), societal and media models (1933–1978), interpretive effects models (1933–1978), and new media interaction models (1996–). The new media interaction models that Neuman and Guggenheim identified as "theoretically grounded integrative research" (p. 19) began to appear even before the web was introduced, despite marking this research trend's heyday from 1996 to the present. Of the new media articles in the list of 200, the earliest ones most often focused on computer-mediated communication and took an interpersonal rather than mass communication perspective (Walther, 1992; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). Scholars were concerned with how well newer media forms approximated real-life communication situations, using concepts like telepresence, social presence, and media richness (Rice, 1993; Schmitz & Fulk, 1991; Steuer, 1992).

Overall, then, these meta-analyses illustrate the general lack of theory in the communication field as revealed in its publications, the lack of agreement on the important theories on which to build empirical studies, and the borrowing of theory from outside the field. Once the Internet was added as a medium or as a collection of media, it would continue to be difficult to determine the theoretical lenses under which to study it.

Ten Years' Look at Use of Mass Comm Theory Related to the Internet

One way to examine how communication researchers view the Internet as a focus of study is to analyze their published work. Therefore this chapter continues the tradition of meta-analysis of communication research by studying the first decade of the twenty-first century in new media research, to help understand whether the Internet has been considered a mass medium and which theories have been most relied upon in the theoretical work published in the most prominent communication journals that generally focus on mass communication research. In 1999 Robert Craig wrote an article in *Communication Theory* in which he charged that communication theory doesn't exist as an identifiable field of study. Instead, he said, we all work within our narrow specialties and schools of thought and, except within these little groups, the theorists of our field can't agree on anything. The analysis I conducted on six prominent communication journals' articles on the Internet provides a test for Craig's point of view.

The journals selected were *Journalism & Mass Communication Research* (*J&MCQ*), *Journal of Communication* (*JOC*), *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (*JOBEM*), *Communication Theory* (*CT*), *Journal of Computer-Mediated-Communication* (*JCMC*), and *New Media & Society* (*NM&S*). The first journal was selected because it is the flagship journal of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), while the *Journal of Communication* serves the same function for the International Communication Association (ICA) and the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* is published by the Broadcast Education Association. *Communication Theory*, also a publication of ICA, is the only journal exclusively devoted to theory in the field. The last two journals listed focus only on communication technologies as a subject of interest, and both have grown to be well-respected journals begun in the early days of the Internet. *New Media & Society was* established in 1999 and is currently ranked 18th of the 67 journals in communication. The *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* was inaugurated as an online journal in 1995, but, as of January 2008, has been published as a print journal. Thomson Reuters Journal citation ranking for this publication is third of all communication journals. The other journals were included in the previously published meta-analyses.[1]

For this study the total number of articles as well as that of the subset of articles devoted to new media appearing in these six journals were tallied. Each article was categorized by its disciplinary home (mass communication, interpersonal communication, cognitive psychology, and so on). Each article was also classified according to its use of a particular mass communication theory, if present. As found in the previous studies, however, many articles contained no theory at all – a total of 26 percent of all the coded articles related to new media. Lack of theory may be attributed to the newness of the phenomenon being observed, where scholars feel more comfortable conducting exploratory work rather than making

Table 34.1 Percentage of articles on new media containing no theoretical framework appearing from 2000 to 2009.

Journal of Computer Mediated Communication	22.2%
New Media & Society	33.4
Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly	22.8
Journal of Communication	5.9
Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media	30.4
Communication Theory	0

theoretical claims. Secondly, researchers might find a communication aspect of a new medium interesting, but they may not immediately see how it is related to older media and may fail to apply a particular theory to the measurement of that phenomenon. Of course the more plausible reason for the lack of theory is the failure to do the hard work of thinking theoretically, even about a new medium. Judging from the meta-analyses previously conducted, this appears to be a problem in our field. In these six journals, articles that lacked a theoretical basis ranged from 5.9 percent in *Journal of Communication* to 33.4 percent in *New Media & Society* (see Table 34.1).

In the early years, new media research began appearing across a number of disciplines and few of the studies cross-referenced work in other disciplines – such as information science, information systems, science, technology, and society, and social informatics. This lack of interdisciplinary work may also have led to the delay in building theory of any kind. Each discipline tended to work within its own boundaries.

Use of theory in new media articles

A total of 886 articles on new media topics in the six journals were analyzed. That number included all of the articles in the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* (386) and *New Media & Society* (336). *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* published 57 articles, *Journal of Communications* 57 articles, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 47 articles, and *Communication Theory* 11 articles over the 10-year period. Articles were classified as "new media" if the thrust of the subject matter addressed involved the Internet, information and communication technologies, or gaming (whether or not it was clear that the games were played online).

When the whole span was broken down into five-year periods, there was no real increase in the percentage of articles devoted to new media topics, despite the increase in the importance of the Internet over the second five-year period. In fact the percentage actually declined in *J&MCQ* (from 14.7 percent to 12.2 percent) and in *JOBEM* (from 14.1 percent to 12.2 percent). Small increases were found in *JOC* (from 11.1 percent to 12.2 percent) and in *CT* (from 1.4 percent to 3.7 percent). Of course, all the articles in *JCMC* and *NM&S* were devoted to new media topics. In the broadly focused communication journals, either the editors were less willing to acknowledge the importance of new media for their field over this time, or

Table 34.2 Percentage of articles on new media applying mass communication theory or concepts.

Journal of Computer Mediated Communication	13.7%
New Media & Society	16.4%
Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly	38.6%
Journal of Communication	31.4%
Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media	30.4%
Communication Theory	0

Table 34.3 Number of theories/concepts and their disciplinary home.

Theory	*JCMC*	*NM&S*	*J&MQ*	*JOC*	*JOBEM*	*CT*
None used	86	114	13	3	17	0
Mass comm	53	55	22	16	14	1
Interpersonal	11	3	1	3	0	0
Cognitive psychology	45	10	3	5	6	2
Sociology	46	23	4	5	1	1
Economics/business	31	10	2	3	1	0
science, technology and society	8	8	1	2	1	1
Critical/cultural	28	32	2	2	2	1
new media	17	50	1	5	2	2
Methods/not theory	16	3	2	1	0	0
Theory building	11	6	2	2	1	0
Other	34	22	4	4	2	3

authors chose to submit their work to journals dedicated to new media. It is also possible that editors did not view Internet-based communications as part of the scope of the journal's mission.

Mass communication theories ranked second (following the "no theory" category) for theories used across all journals except *Communication Theory* (see Table 34.2). Other categories of theories in the articles were interpersonal communication, cognitive psychology, sociology, economics or business, science, technology, and society, critical or cultural studies, and new media (original theories).

Still other articles were testing methodologies or building theory (see Table 34.3). Sometimes categorizing the theory found in the articles was a challenge, given some variations on broad themes or the use of multiple theories. Also, the degree to which an article is building theory was somewhat difficult to determine. Since this analysis was primarily focused on determining the use of mass communication theories, I did not examine every theory referenced in the article and then attempt to determine the specific contribution the article made to those theories. Instead, only the dominant theory of the manuscript was coded.

Unsurprisingly, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* contained the largest percentage of articles with mass communication theory as their base. The journal serves as one of the foremost journals in the mass communication field.

However, *Journal of Communication*, which is a major journal for scholars of mass communication as well as for scholars of interpersonal communication and organizational communication (among other communication disciplines), was the second highest in the use of mass communication theories for the coded articles (31.4 percent; see Table 34.3). The other journals had lower percentages of mass communication theory in their content.

As might also be expected, U&G theory and diffusion of innovations, with 29 and 23 articles respectively, were the most frequently cited theories with roots in mass communications. This finding was not unexpected because both theories deal with topics related to a new medium – who adopts it at what point and under what circumstances, how people use it once it is adopted, whether it serves as a functional replacement for the older medium, and so on. In 2000 Ruggiero proposed an approach to U&G theory for the twenty-first century that would apply to web-based communications, as an increasing number of new applications and uses were emerging. The theory's usefulness in a rapidly changing communication environment may increase its importance. Ruggiero cited the theory's adaptability and increasingly sophisticated nature, where "the focus of inquiry has shifted from a mechanistic perspective's interest in direct effects of media on receivers to a psychological perspective that stresses individual use and choice" (Ruggiero 2000, p. 25; see Rubin, 1994). He also noted that the micro unit of data collection had remained the individual, so that "interpretations of the individual's response by researchers has shifted from the sender to the receiver, from the media to the audience" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 25). This shift had made U&G more useful to those examining various types of communication that had emerged since 2000, such as communication through social media and the increase in user-generated content more generally. Though focusing on the importance of U&G as a theory that was helpful for understanding Internet-based media use at the turn of this century, Ruggiero predicted that "electronic communication technology may sufficiently alter the context of media use that current mass communication theories do not yet address" (pp. 28–29).

Perhaps U&G can be expanded to provide not only a framework that addresses users and the ways they select appropriate media on the basis of their own needs (for entertainment, information, and so on), but also one that incorporates elements of users acting both as producers and as distributors (of information, entertainment, and so on). It could not, however deal with media effects unless an expansion of the theory took place.

Though diffusion of innovations research has also been key to understanding how a particular type of communication attracts users over time, it is of less use to the advancement of theory once the innovation has experienced widespread adoption. Diffusion may not be a theory so much as an explanation of the way in which a new idea or technology spreads through a system and of the speed with which that occurs. It has little predictive value as a theory but helps us understand better whether an innovation has more or less caught on with the public. Diffusion studies also provide an opportunity for a researcher to compare the legacy media

(when they were newly diffusing) with the current media in terms of time taken to reach mass adoption or in terms of whether the innovators and early adopters shared characteristics across media.

Other concepts and theories were called upon frequently in the articles addressing the Internet in the six journals, but none of them could be said to have a solid basis in mass communications. Those theories included digital divide (23 articles), interactivity (17 articles), variations on the idea of "presence" (18 articles), social networks (13 articles), identity theories (16 articles) and social capital (15 articles). Several of these concepts/theories address characteristics of the Internet or of the user that were either absent (social networks, digital divide) or under-articulated (interactivity, identity theories) for legacy media.

The digital divide theory should have had roots in mass communications, as it expressed the same relationship between socioeconomic status and mass media use for information. Tichenor, Donahue, and Olien (1970) formulated the knowledge gap hypothesis in 1970.

> As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease. (Tichenor et al., 1970, pp. 159–160)

But, as Bonfadelli noted, the theoretical connection was not made by most researchers in their studies of the digital divide, nor was the empirical evidence of the knowledge gap referenced in digital divide studies (Bonfadelli, 2002, p. 66). However, in my meta-analysis, four studies of the digital divide made reference to the knowledge gap as the precursor of the digital divide – meaning that, at some point in time, scholars made the connection between the two concepts.

Other mass communication theories were incorporated in the studies with less frequency across time in the six journals. Those theories were Habermas' public sphere model of deliberative democracy and theory of communicative action (8); agenda setting (7); framing (5); gatekeeping (4); and the concept of credibility in media (8). Perhaps as time goes on more connections will be made between emerging media online and mass communication theories.

In some ways, however, new media on the Internet provide a moving target for researchers. At the moment, social media are in vogue, as new types of communities are being established regularly. Traffikd.com lists more than 400 such sites, broken down into numerous categories. Thinking about how to apply mass communication theory in a continually changing environment is difficult – at best.

What Does This Tell Us?

The analysis of these six journals in the 10-year period when the Internet was growing into a more mature medium and evolving in its technological capabilities has shown us that mass communication theories have been applied to a limited

extent in communication research. Theoretically based articles that address the Internet in these journals have infrequently appeared, unless the journals were dedicated to the "new media." As has happened with television and with radio before it, scholars have been concerned with the diffusion of the new medium and the ways in which it could be differentiated from previously established media. Next the researchers borrowed concepts and theories from a range of disciplines – namely psychology, social psychology, and sociology – to explain the new communication phenomena. They also incorporated mass communication theories where appropriate. At this point they have begun to either develop theory that focuses on certain unique characteristics of the new medium or adapt some established theories for that purpose. In this vein, our analysis turned up 17 articles on interactivity, 18 on the nature of presence, 13 on social networks, 16 on identity theories, and 15 that examined social capital.

The borrowed concepts that were the focus of more than 10 of the articles analyzed were applied to media or to group relationships before the Internet existed. Social presence, for example, was first described by J. Short, E. Williams, and B. Christie (1976) in the context of telecommunications, to refer to the degree to which the experience of viewing television or listening to the radio could be said to approximate the presence of a face-to-face communications environment. The concept of social networks originated in 1954, when John Barnes was writing about his work in a Norwegian island parish (Barnes, 1954); but it was later adopted by anthropologists, sociologists, and social psychologists long before social network analysis of online media had been thought of. Social capital, a concept popularized by sociologist Robert Putnam in his book *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000; see also Putnam, 1993), was also applied by other social scientists (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). And social identity theory was defined in terms of intergroup behavior in the 1970s and 1980s, by Tajful and Turner (1979).

Interactivity

Interactivity is a concept that has caught the attention of a large number of theorists and has been the focus of many empirical studies. Few concepts have attracted much scholarship that focuses on their explication, yet at least five concept reviews and explications have been conducted on interactivity (Jensen, 1998; Kiousis, 2002; Quiring & Schweiger, 2008; Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli & Ariel, 2007). Such attention to definition signals either the importance of a concept or much confusion related to its meaning. We are likely to witness more such definitional pieces as researchers try to fit social media into their analysis of interactivity. From the published work to date, however, interactivity has been viewed as a key concept in communication theory as applied to the Internet, to mass communications, or to both. Rafaeli has been writing about the nature of interactivity since his dissertation research in 1985, revising and updating his thoughts in light of changes in technology, but, more importantly, outlining the development of his thinking about its theoretical nature. He and Ariel see the concept of "interactivity" as one that "is located at the

confluence of mass and interpersonal communication and perhaps serves as one of the bridges of these two" (Rafaeli & Ariel, 2007, p. 72). The authors see the concept as being process-focused instead of having a focus on the medium, and thus as being able to be adapted to all media and not limited just to new media, computers, or networks. Acknowledging conceptual difficulties in published work, they define interactivity as a "process-oriented variable concerning responsiveness," arguing that this approach focuses on both actual uses and perceived outcomes (p. 84).

The earliest work on interactivity in a pre-Internet environment focused on many of the same issues, according to Quiring and Schweiger's explication (2008). They argue that two strains of thinking, originating in computer science and in sociology, influenced the scholarship on interactivity.

> Initially, media use and effects research concentrated on the contact of people with mass media, thinking of recipients as an "active audience." The uses and gratifications approach in particular, examining the use of mass media by recipients according to their needs (e.g., Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1973; Rubin, 2002), comes close to the perspective of computer sciences as it analyzes interaction between recipients and technical media and its contents respectively. (Quiring & Schweiger, 2008, p. 149)

The authors flesh out different ways of analyzing user–user interactivity and user–system activity, arguing that "all levels, dimensions, and characteristics of interactive communication are applicable for both user–user and user–system interactivity" (pp. 163–164). Quiring and Schweiger (2008), Rafaeli and Ariel (2007), and others move us closer to considering concepts and theories that allow us to think about mass communication, Internet communication, and interpersonal communication within the same framework.

Other concepts applied to Internet-based media have also been dealt with empirically and theoretically, drawing on the ways they can be applied across media, but more work needs to be done in this regard before we can reach consensus on the ways theory can be applied across media.

A Future of Mass Communication Theory That Includes the Internet

Predicting how the Internet will evolve is not really possible, given our limited knowledge of the technological innovations to come as well as our inability to assess what people might do with future technologies. So we are left with an assessment of the situation at this point in time. We have been able to observe the trend to demassification of media and can only expect that to continue. This trend did not start with the Internet, however. At least as far back as the diffusion of both audio and video cassette recorders, individuals have been able to produce content without any direct connection to the mass media, yet with the capability to distribute it to mass audiences. Examples of the effectiveness, in terms of

impact on audiences, of demassified media have been found in the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s, in the fall of the USSR in 1991, and in a range of social movements (including the Seattle World Trade conference and the Zapatistas in Oxaca, Mexico). In all these instances the role of the mass media was minimized, while messages were still reaching large numbers of people in audiences. In all these cases mass communication theories were applied to these uses of more personal media.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century social media represent the fastest growing use of the Internet. A most interesting feature of these media is that they combine characteristics of most communication environments. We can read newspapers, watch information and entertainment video, message our friends, distribute information to our personal networks, and complete a review of a hotel where we recently stayed – all within the same Internet application. Taking Facebook as an example, we find that mass communication, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, advertising, and public relations-based communications are all possible within a single Facebook page. Does this mean that we study these separate kinds of communications apart from one another or develop some kinds of theory that apply to the combined communication types within the social media interface? Walther and colleagues (2005) said that the problem was that the Internet is not one medium, but multiple media. However, if our theories were applied more broadly, they might be able to address a wider range of these media under a single umbrella theory.

Because Facebook does not share data readily or generally permit network analyses to be conducted on the published data, it is difficult to assess how people use these various communication types on Facebook. We can do surveys of Facebook users, and that has been done. We can analyze the content of Facebook groups that are publicly accessible, and there is published scholarship that has taken this approach. However, if we are really to develop any new theory that shows how Facebook or other social media are used and with what impact across what size audiences, we must be able to obtain accurate data to test our theories. If that were possible, it might mean that we could move in the direction of a grand theory of communication, something we never thought possible. Until that time, we are left to testing old theories arising from our own disciplinary silos in the field of communication.

The nature of new media has meant that the audience for any kind of message has a shorter attention span and that multitasking has become the users' habit. This applies to older adults as well as to the youngest children. This practice of rapid movement between media forms will likely have an impact on the outcome of a variety of media effects studies.

It is also possible that the "app" approach to consuming media, as a solution to multiple distractions, will move us back to the consumption of one type of medium at a time. What I am exploring here is the idea of changing communication theories as a result of changing practices of consuming media as well as producing and distributing content. Perhaps the user turned content producer or content

distributor is not the key element on which to focus in a changed media environment. Perhaps it is the personal practices related to consumption of media that are most important. In 1985Neil Postman wrote *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, which is about the superficiality of the media that are mostly focused on entertainment and that cannot manage complex issues important to civil society (Postman, 1986). More recently Sherry Turkle, in a turnaround from her previous optimistic assessment of online identity, bemoans the loss of face-to-face human interaction that has come with technological developments (Turkle, 2011). Both authors seem to have now a dystopian and technological deterministic view of the power of technology to affect what we do with information – Postman with the legacy media; Turkle with the new. The question before us was whether the Internet is a mass medium. Turkle suggests it has even more power than the mass media to distract us from what she sees as real communication. As the relative complexity and focus of the content change, will our theories also change?

Perhaps it is too soon to determine what the Internet will be – and, for that matter, how mass communication will evolve. What we do know is that our communication environments have undergone major change with the Internet. It is not known whether this means that mass communication theory will be useful to understanding the Internet or will become less useful as the Internet capabilities increase and practices change. For the moment, though, the answer to the question is that we need to continue looking at the Internet through the lens of mass communication theory before we either abandon it or figure out a way for it to fit the parameters of Internet communication.

Note

1 An interesting fact about the original article Merrill Morris and I published online in a very early issue of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* is that it was later published as part of a special issue of *Journal of Communication*, a print publication. I have always wondered how many people might have noticed the article at all, had it not appeared in print as well as online. At that time online publications were not held in high regard.

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35

How Global Is the Internet?
Reflections on Economic, Cultural, and Political Dimensions of the Networked "Global Village"

Kai Hafez

It may at first sight seem deluded to deny that the Internet – particularly the World Wide Web, this "network of networks" – has a globalizing effect. Yet a number of phenomena place a question mark over both the quality and the quantity of virtual border crossing. Rather than having sparked off a revolution in international communication, the Internet is a technology on the basis of which a global culture *may* unfold and become established in evolutionary fashion – in a process that may extend over many decades, perhaps centuries. Yet even this developmental prognosis rests on as yet shaky foundations. One might also argue that, in terms of actual use, the Internet, despite its potential to network the globe, has never been primarily a *global* system of communication. The tendency of national and regional interconnections to increase more rapidly than international ones with the help of the Internet may be intensified. Cultural peculiarities may even be reinforced; cultures may move further apart.

Theoretical Reflections on Globalization and Transnational Mass Communication

Theoretical thought on globalization and media can be deployed into three fields: (a) system connectivity; (b) system change; and (c) system interdependence (Hafez, 2007, pp. 7–23). Phenomena of connectivity describe the extent, speed, and intensity of the international or intercultural exchange of information. Connectivity may be generated between entities, however defined, through various means of communication. Alongside mediated interpersonal communication (telephone,

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e-mail, letter, fax, and so on) we can distinguish the following fields of communication that depend on mass media:

- direct access to the range of communicative services produced by another country or culture (Internet; direct broadcasts by satellite; international broadcasting – special TV and radio services in foreign languages, broadcast to other countries; import or export of media);
- access to information and contexts in another country or cultural area, conveyed by journalism (international reporting on television, radio, the press; corresponding media services on the Internet).

One of the key factors in shaping the globalization debate over the last decade was thus the fact that the number of means of transmission and exchange of information beyond borders has increased dramatically. The new media have set the overall tone of the debate since the 1990s. The concrete form of connectivity via these new media depends on a range of technological, socioeconomic, and cultural parameters:

- *Technological reach and socioeconomic implications of media technology* The nation-states and cultural areas of this planet are characterized by very different technological capacities for global communicative connectivity.
- *User reach* The debate on the globalization of the media all too often fails to distinguish between technological reach and user reach. The number of those who use a technology in the proper sense lies below the technologically possible use – and cross-border use is of course only *one* variant of the use to which the new media may be put. We cannot simply assume that it is the primary form.
- *Linguistic and cultural competence* To communicate with people in other states and cultural areas or to use their media generally requires linguistic competence, which only minorities in any population enjoy. To avoid dismissing cross-border connectivity as marginal from the outset, it is vital to distinguish between various user groups: globalization elites and peripheries. Connectivity is without doubt partly dependent on the nature of the message communicated. Music, image, text – behind this sequence hides a kind of magic formula of globalization. Music surely enjoys the largest global spread, and images surely occupy a middle position (for example, press photographs or the images of CNN, also accessible to users who understand no English), while most texts create only meagre international resonance because of language barriers.

The Internet has introduced a new subtlety to the global array of information, but cross-border linkage is obviously growing more slowly than local and national interactions in many areas (Halavais, 2000, pp. 7–28). Beyond the question of connectivity we need to clarify whether receiving cultures are changed by transmitting

cultures in the process of cross-border communication through the Internet. Three forms of cultural change are mentioned again and again in the globalization debate:

(a) the adoption of the "other" culture (above all, in the form of Westernized globalization);
(b) the emergence of "glocalized" hybrid cultures (Robertson, 1994), which are influenced both by global and local elements;
(c) the revitalization of traditional and other local cultures as a reaction to globalization.

Mass media have the potential to change systems, and here the individual media differ, sometimes significantly. The areas in which the Internet can work to change systems are diverse, because its form is untypical of the mass media. The Internet can generate alternative publics. It can unite political actors and oppositional landscapes worldwide to form a "global civil society." The CIA report "Global Trends 2015" (National Intelligence Council, 2000) predicted new challenges for national and international politics. The report assumes that, while the nation-state will remain the most important political actor, its efficiency will be measured on the basis of how it masters globalization and how it comes to terms with an increasingly articulate and well-organized civil society worldwide. The Internet, it could be argued, is becoming all the more significant as a platform capable of articulating and shaping the will of the citizenry, creating civil networks and even mobilizing people politically. In view of the structures underlying television and radio worldwide, which tend to be commercial, government-run, or public, direct broadcasting by satellite is a downright elite medium in comparison to the Internet.

However, in light of the sobering appraisal of connectivity, we clearly have to assess the influence of cross-border mass communication on system change with much care (Sparks, 2000). Today every political and social change, from the fall of the Berlin Wall through the political upheavals in Ukraine, Lebanon, and Kyrgyzstan to the pope's funeral, is thought to be moulded by the global media. Yet we are clearly getting ahead of ourselves. Mass gatherings following the death of a pope have been common throughout history, long before the modern mass media, and political revolutions and uprisings are nothing new either. Quite the opposite. During the era of the information revolution, all appearances to the contrary, the number of free social and media systems has by no means increased. It has in fact decreased, or at least stagnated.

However, the notion of a world linked by communication extends and changes the traditional model of national media systems. It becomes increasingly difficult to demarcate the societal system within which the media operate. Publics can act transnationally, as can politics and the media themselves. Alongside each national media system, there thus arises a second global system. To the extent that it becomes a component of the flow of information, this second system has great and growing influence. Do these changes, however, allow us to speak of a "communicative world system"? More important than the mere existence of other entities beyond national

media systems is a deeper understanding of their fundamental relations. Are foreign political systems really as influential as domestic ones? Do journalists feel as keen a sense of duty toward their foreign public as they do to their domestic one, and does this lead to changes in the journalistic product? Are global market and capital interconnections as strong as national and regional ones? Cultural and societal change in a global system is not produced by *connectivity* alone, but it is based on *interdependence*. In an interdependent global system, autonomous national systems change into partly autonomous subsystems of a global macro system.

In striving to understand situations in which cross-border resources of communication have palpably failed to generate connectivity or even system change, it is essential to look at the fundamental relations between the transmitters and receivers of mass communication. Despite the extensive exchange of information and news, media systems are firmly in the grip of nation states. National owners, investors, and publics dominate; transnational media (such as the German–French TV network *Arte*) are hardly used; the transnationalization of media capital mostly ends at subregional borders (Compaine, 2002). Entertainment may have a global hue in many respects. News and information, however, can be domesticated almost at will, because they are created for a very limited, usually national group of consumers typified by national interests, reservations, stereotypes, and cultural expectations. The media have to respond to these. While doing so, they are constantly reproducing them. Who could expect global media diplomacy from such provincial systems?

It is no accident that many commentators have evoked civil society as a third force alongside companies and governments. Many hoped that a "global civil society" would spring into life – but here too there is no question of there being mature interdependence. Perceptual distortions and informational uncertainties typify global exchanges via the Internet as much as they do classical journalism. Societies' enhanced ability to present themselves to the world has helped generate a flood of information, making the Internet surfer an isolated "laptop anthropologist" and facilitating manipulation of every kind (up to and including cyberwar). Here too, there is a dearth of binding and stable processes of informational feedback. Moreover, Net-based cross-border political alliances, even though much debated, as in the case of the globalization or the "Occupy" movements, are typically casual in nature and characterized by arbitrary selection and random events; and they lag far behind "offline politics" – in other words behind the quotidian actions of national governments.

Global Internet Connectivity: The Digitally Divided "Tower of Babel"

The medium of the Internet has taken center stage in the globalization debate because it differs from the classical media in many ways. The Internet is not necessarily market-oriented. It is in principle beyond the reach of authority and has enormous potential to link societies – as opposed to merely politics, the economy,

and institutions, or the odd cosmopolitan individual – communicatively across borders, by eliminating the separation between sender and recipient. The global Internet's geography points to rapid growth in international Internet traffic over the last decade (Hafez, 2007, pp. 100–103). Despite the implosion of the "new market" for information technology (IT) at the turn of the millennium, the international exchange of data via the Internet has steadily increased. It is doubling almost every year, in terms of both technological capacity to send information (supply) and actual use (traffic).

The central artery of exchange via the Internet is the transatlantic axis between the US and Europe, the flow of information being asymmetrical in that more of it reaches Europe than the US. In any case, the level of transatlantic data traffic in both directions still lies far above that of transpacific exchange, another major axis of Internet traffic. Does the sheer extent of Internet traffic allow us to speak of a globalization of Internet use? There are clearly very different geographical foci. Global Internet traffic does not entail a symmetrically woven web, but a transatlantic "data highway," next to which many other links between continents and countries look like poorly developed country roads, some of them full of potholes.

The quantity of data, moreover, tells us nothing about *who* uses the Internet, whether, for example, it is used in equal measure for social and for commercial ends, or whether the latter predominate. Business Internet use can change the world via the indirect route of economic processes, by moving production plants and jobs. It does not, however, automatically produce a networked and globally informed world, in which politics, economy, and civil societies have sufficient knowledge of "each other." If the economic sector dominated cross-border communication via the Internet, other sectors of society could be globalized at a significantly slower pace, generating an unbalanced form of globalization, with consequences that are far from clear. A world coming together materially is by no means one in which global knowledge increases. Misperceptions and conflicts may be reinforced. Is the Internet a machine driving global economic centralization and featuring explosive cultural force?

Another problem: what is the relationship between, on the one hand, growing global Internet use and, on the other, local (national and subregional) and regional use? Global Internet flows can be regarded as both absolute and relative quantitative indicators of increasing connectivity. One can speak of a clear trend toward increasing global connectivity only if one can prove that the subregional, national, and regional rate of growth in exchange via the Internet is *lower* than that of international Internet traffic. Otherwise the key trend characteristic of the Internet might be the stimulation of local relations rather than that of global ones. Is the Internet a local medium? A study of the structures of interconnection by Alexander Halavais has shown that international links are far rarer than national. In the United States around 90 percent of all hyperlinks remain within the national borders. In Europe the figure is 60 to 70 percent at least, and around 70 percent of cross-border European links lead to the US, which is evidence of successful transatlantic relations rather than of genuine globalization (Halavais, 2000).

Table 35.1 Native speakers online.

	Internet users by language	*Internet users % of total*
English	565,004,126	26.8%
Chinese	509,965,013	24.2%
Spanish	164,968,742	7.8%
Japanese	99,182,000	4.7%
Portuguese	82,586,600	3.9%
German	75,422,674	3.6%
Arabic	65,365,400	3.3%
French	59,779,525	3.0%
Russian	59,700,000	3.0%
Korean	39,440,000	2.0%
Rest of the languages	350,557,483	17.8%
Top 10 languages[1]	1,615,957,333	100%

Note
[1]Example of interpretation: There are 99,182,000 Japanese-speaking people using the Internet; this represents 4.7% of all Internet users in the world.
Source: Internet World Stats, 2010 – in million users.

One of the most interesting developments in the realm of the Internet is its increasing multilingualization. The hegemony of English as transnational lingua franca persists but is rapidly diminishing. Around three quarters of all Internet users are *not* native speakers of English, but of Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, German, Arabic, French, Russian, Korean, or other languages (see Table 35.1). The increasing internationalization of the Net entails a diversification of users' linguistic abilities. The content of the Net also appears to be increasingly multilingual. As the creation of websites is not limited to Western industrialized countries, in the foreseeable future it may no longer be only the users of the Internet who are multilingual; its content may be as well. Gert Raeithel, the American studies scholar based in Munich, proceeds on the assumption that none other than computers and the Internet will bring the linguistic dominance of English to an end (Raeithel, 2000).

Today languages are already in competition on the Internet, as various organizations worldwide propagate further development of the multilingual Net (see, e.g., Taik-Sup Auh, 2006). Between 1998 and 2007 the proportion of English fell from around 75 to 54 percent. Other European languages make up around 20 percent of languages on the Net (see http://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content_language/all, accessed April 3, 2013). The proportion of non-European languages, above all languages such as Japanese and Chinese, currently amounts to more than 20 percent – and, given the huge population of countries such as China, this segment has particularly great potential for growth. Hundreds of languages have a modest but growing Internet presence; the number of languages on the Internet is steadily increasing. The Internet, dominated as it has been for years by the technological power of the US and by English, is evolving into a "web of Babel."

The ongoing development of Universal Networking Language (UNL) is a trend running counter to the Net of Babel; it is intended to enable direct computer-aided translation of Internet content.[1] However, the systems using it are not yet fully mature.

One of the main reasons for the tendency toward multilingualism is the introduction of non-Latin characters in the addresses of the World Wide Web. On the one hand, the move away from the ASCII code as general standard has made it easier for large parts of the world to access the Internet. Around 90 percent of people in the world do not speak English as a native language and can use it as a second language only to a very limited degree. In this respect, the Internet is slowly breaking away from its attachment to Western elites. On the other hand, the Internet threatens to disintegrate into linguistic subcommunities, which runs counter to the notion that it is helping to globalize knowledge. Rather than promoting the exchange of global knowledge, the "Babel" variant of the global knowledge society will do little more than create a highly compressed version of cultures anchored in their national languages. The multilingual Internet, moreover, can rapidly become the vehicle of a reinvigorated nationalism, as was demonstrated for example during the Sino-American spat over colliding jets above the South China Sea in 2001, when thousands of Chinese expressed their displeasure at the American government on the Internet.

The Internet's development into a multilingual tool used equally in all the parts of the world is being hindered by the striking asymmetry in global Internet connections. While the level of Internet use is high in the industrialized states as a result of their solid technological infrastructure, high pro capita income, and advanced media competence, the situation in most developing countries looks very different. NICs (newly industrialized countries) such as China are increasingly catching up with the West and are using the Net in ways that conform to their political systems (Schmiedel, 2000). The Middle East, Africa, and large parts of Asia, however, in which the growth of Internet connections and use is restricted to the urban elites, are falling further and further behind the rest of the world.

Even continental comparison (see Table 35.2) fails to fully convey the true global divide. It is evident that Africa and the Middle East are very far behind, but Asia appears to be in a strong position, having many more users – just like North America or Europe. The fact that Asia is home to a population several times larger than North America and Europe taken together must of course be taken into account. While in Europe and North America around 60 percent of the total population is online, in Asia the proportion is only around 20 percent. If all sections of the global population were equally networked, there would be far more Asian Net users than Western ones. It is also striking that the vast majority of Asian users are from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. Most other countries on the Asian continent have a user rate of less than, or around, 10 percent of the national population – by comparison with 60 percent and more in developed industrialized countries.

Table 35.2 Global Internet use.

	Internet users (in millions)	*approximate population*	*Internet users % of population*
Africa	118,609,620	1,000,000,000	11,8%
Asia	922,329,554	4,000,000,000	23,06%
Europe	476,213,935	740,000,000	64,35%
Middle East	68,553,666	–[1]	–[1]
North America	272,066,000	530,000,000	51,33%
Latin America/Caribean	215,939,400	500,000,000	43,19%
Oceania/Australia[2]	21,293,830	–[1]	–[1]

Notes
[1] The population calculation is confined to classical continents with their clearly defined outreach.
[2] Example of interpretation: Africa has 118,609,620 Internet users, a figure that represents 11,8% of the total African population.
Source: Internet World Stats, 2012 and own calculations.

The phrase "digital divide" has two different meanings today. It describes the deficits in the development and use of information and communication technologies on a global scale – that is, when comparing highly industrialized and developing countries. "Digital divide" also describes imbalances between informational elites and peripheries, typical *within* most countries of the world. But the gulf between developed and developing countries recalls the center–periphery model conceived by Johan Galtung and used in dependency theory (Galtung, 1972).

The conditions in developing countries are, however, fundamentally different, and the digital divide in these countries also requires a different kind of explanation. Far from ageing, the population here tends to be dominated by children, adolescents, and young adults. The resulting low level of commitment to conventions and the structurally high degree of potential willingness to learn how to use information technology make developing countries "Internet countries" *par excellence*. The computer training courses common in India at markets and bazaars show very clearly that people in developing countries are more willing to learn about information and communication technology (ICT) than people in industrialized countries, especially if this process holds out the promise of social advancement. The dearth of libraries and of access to information within the educational and health systems, often limited opportunities for the free exchange of information as a result of authoritarian conditions, and other shortcomings make the Internet a genuine source of hope for the future of developing countries. This future might be bright, were it not for the old problems characteristic of the North–South conflict – such as poor (telecommunications) infrastructure, extremely unequal income distribution, and illiteracy – which will make Internet and ICT use in the developing countries the privilege of elites. The majority of the global population still lacks Internet access.

A number of international institutions have recently pointed to the dangers of the digital divide. The Internet Society Task Force, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) with members in 170 countries, has warned that the number of Internet users in developing countries is often almost impossible to measure,

while the digital divide between the US/Canada and the other highly industrialized countries and the developing countries is constantly increasing. The Task Force is urging politicians across the world to create the structural conditions necessary to counter this trend, for example by reducing the high customs duty on computer technology and by liberalizing telecommunications markets. As things stand at present, according to the Task Force, it is entirely possible that the industrialized countries will extend their lead over the developing countries through the new economy rather than reducing it with the help of ICT and the Internet, as many participants in the globalization debate have hoped. At the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, General Secretary Kofi Annan also urged the developing countries to see the new information technologies as an incentive to "leapfrog" stages of modernization such as industrialization and to invest directly in the new media.

The heads of government at the G8 summit in Okinawa (July 22–23, 2000) also warned about the problems of a growing informational gulf. In their Okinawa Charter they outlined the risk that the poorest countries will fall yet further behind as a result of the rapid progress in the field of information technology in the industrialized countries, in the advanced NICs, and even in some developing countries. This would apply mostly in cases where the shortcomings of the telecommunications infrastructure hamper the spread of the Internet. The G8 also called upon developing countries to create the best possible structural conditions, particularly in the political sphere, and resolved to found a working group, Dot Force, to clarify what contribution the industrialized countries can make to the development of the Internet in the developing countries (Hafez, 2001).

Finally, in its World Employment Report (2001), the International Labour Organization (ILO) also starts from the assumption that the existing digital divide between North and South constitutes a severe hindrance to reducing global unemployment (Hafez, 2001). The report predicts that society will continue to be divided into two classes in terms of IT and Internet use for a long time to come. The vast majority of countries are barely networked at all and thus fail to fulfill, in the field of the Internet, even the basic condition and minimal theoretical criterion of communicative globalization: *connectivity*. Far from ameliorating the North–South divide, that is, the so-called "knowledge gap" between industrialized countries and their developing counterparts, as the key thinkers writing on the Internet assumed, the industrialized countries are in fact increasing their stock of knowledge while the developing countries are still lagging behind. Inequalities are thus being reinforced in the information age.

Those states and societies that can claim to be part of the global Internet community because they can increase the quantity of international data exchange through large numbers of users are at the same time subject to the rules of a growing multilingualism on the Net. Multilingualism increases the proportion of those able to participate in Internet discourse worldwide, but also strengthens national and regional patterns of interaction and impedes cross-cultural global exchange. Apart from cosmopolitan or internationally oriented "virtual communities," which

are in any case only being created to any significant extent between industrialized countries, the Internet may, rather like satellite television, mainly strengthen the formation of national and regional virtual communities in future. It is thus impossible to simply equate the Internet with global interconnections, given the numerous technological, socioeconomic, and linguistic–cultural barriers that bedevil it.

System Changes I: Virtual Cosmopolitanism

One's line of reasoning is shaped significantly by the methodological level at which one is working. Comparative data on quantitative indicators such as the number of Internet connections and users in the North and in the South are sobering. Despite the fact that developing countries are achieving massive rates of growth in Internet connections, they are starting from a very low level. The balance sheet might, however, look quite different should the focus shift to qualitative aspects, that is, away from the Net's limited spread to deployment of the Internet by individual actors, some of whom/which are highly significant socially. A single scholar making use of the Internet, a single organization or party that mobilizes the global public sphere and changes a political landscape with the help of the Internet may be more meaningful than the communicative powerlessness of the unnetworked global majority.

There are as yet no solid studies of the characteristics, structure, or orientation of Internet-based global info-elites. Who goes online regularly to inform him- or herself or others across borders? What social classes and occupational groups do users belong to, and what epistemological and informational processes are set in motion through this particular type of long-distance communication via the Internet? What are the likely social consequences?

It is not the global availability of websites but actual cross-border use – that is, the number of users rather than technological reach – that generates globality. Existing groups of users show, however, that Internet use within societies is highly unequal, even in industrialized countries with a nominally high number of users. A digital divide exists within the highly industrialized countries, above all in the US and in Europe, and it may plunge the Internet into a crisis of adaptation in the medium term. According to a study by the Zukunftsinstitut (Institute for the Future) in Kelkheim in Germany, the number of users in Europe and the US will stagnate over the next few years (Horx, 2000). The euphoria about the Internet as a revolutionary technological utopia that will transform economy and society will die away. The Internet may well fulfill its promise in the long term, but over the short term the stagnation of mass use cannot be ruled out, as the Internet is still too complicated and slow in its present form. Even in the Western world, the Internet mainly serves the middle classes, the well educated and the self-employed, who make up the major portion of the info-elites. Women and older people, according to the Zukunftsinstitut, will have to be the new core groups targeted by innovative Internet strategies.

What has caused this digital divide within the highly industrialized countries? Two reasons suggest themselves, the first technological, the second social. For decades the personal computer (PC) was the main point of entry, and thus it was a barrier to access for the section of the population that had no computing skills or was unable to afford such a machine. Even though the PC is currently losing its role as main access route, the technological future of mobile communication remains uncertain.

Technological hurdles alone, however, hardly constitute a satisfactory explanation. We must instead start from the assumption that large numbers of Europeans and Americans, particularly adults and older people, fail to perceive or cannot imagine that they will get anything out of using the Internet. Studies such as those carried by Michael Margolis and David Resnick in the country most advanced in its Internet use, the United States, have shown that the Net is used mainly for entertainment or as a helpful tool for managing everyday affairs, and only by the info-elites as a source of political information too (Margolis & Resnick, 2000). The authors explain these deficiencies with reference to the limits of human time budgets. For specialized info-elites, the switch from book to Internet may prove advantageous in terms of quality and time, mainly at the level of straightforward checking of facts and obtaining information. For those media consumers focussed chiefly on entertainment and everyday matters, television, radio, and books are still easier to integrate into the daily schedule. They have little time or opportunity to devote themselves to the research-intensive Internet.

National borders rapidly disappear online only if one has cleared all the hurdles to Internet access: media use skills, language, finances. Interest groups may be reconfigured across national borders. New knowledge elites as well as "fun groups" may develop, which exchange knowledge on international topics, express their views, and provide sources of mutual cultural mobilization. It is very difficult to estimate how large this global communication elite is. It is certain, however, that it makes up only a fragment of the general population, and in all probability only a few Internet users regularly engage in cross-border exchange, whether through e-mail contact or through other types of Net use. The characteristics of this global info-elite are unclear and have not as yet been sufficiently covered in the research. In any event, members of this elite have severe problems making themselves understood, depending on how many languages are being actively used. It makes a difference whether one is primarily able to "surf" the English-language Net or whether, like some educated Japanese for example, one has a mastery of the world languages (English and French), as well as a certain (passive) understanding of Chinese and Korean alongside Japanese. Being in the latter position would enable one to move around with substantially more flexibility within the multilingual World Wide Web and other networks.

However, despite the Tower of Babel syndrome, which separates even the global Net elites from one another, elite users may have sociodemographic features in common. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldrigde have coined the term "cosmocrats" for a stratum comprising around 50 million people with a relatively high income. These are the real winners of globalization. They are not only au fait with modern communication technologies, but they also benefit most from globalization financially:

> Even if its roots are commercial, globalization is already provoking profound social, political, and cultural questions. For instance, one social result is a broadening class of people – we dub them the cosmocrats – who have benefited from globalization. These people constitute perhaps the most meritocratic ruling class the world has seen, yet they are often as worryingly disconnected from local communities as the companies they work for are. (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p. xxii)

Despite the differing definitions of global info-elites and "cosmocrats," the very lack of ties to the local sphere is a problem common to the new elites of globalization; this problem may be termed "virtual cosmopolitanism." Journalist Charlotte Wiedemann puts it in the following penetrating way:

> The Internet beats new paths for the interpretation of foreign cultures. If it is available online, a single English-language newspaper may mould this country's international image more than all the media in the national language put together. In case anyone should misunderstand me: the Internet has made it vastly more straightforward to find out about other countries. I lived in Malaysia for four years, with no decent newspaper and no major library close by. The Internet was like a lifeline. I first found out about the countries in the region online, then offline. I was astonished how splendidly you can prepare yourself with the help of the Internet – and how greatly the virtual reality differed from the actual reality every time. In the virtual Cambodia, an international tribunal prosecuting the remaining leaders of the Khmer Rouge is long overdue. The Internet does not convey the great, traumatized silence that prevails on this topic in the country, beyond a small circle of activists. You can familiarize yourself online with the views of highly interesting people – once you arrive in the country, you soon realize: almost no one knows who they are. They are virtually prominent. In many countries the digital divide marks an inner divide, a divide of the mind, of perception, a social one in any event. Only in its virtual, odourless aspects does the world appear to be moving closer together, to be getting smaller – not in its messy ones. In some places, the political opposition is strong only on the Internet. Many ethnic minorities demonstrate a cohesion online which they lost a long time ago offline. Separatists, fighting hopelessly in the jungle, appear triumphant on the virtual stage. Individuals, groups, whole peoples are able to create the identity of their dreams on the Internet. What is at stake here? What do we know? A middle class area in the Philippines may look to us like a slum. We are blind as soon as we leave our familiar cultural setting, the zone of symbols familiar to us. A more simple and yet more difficult task than interpreting a Tibetan scroll painting is deciphering everyday life. Interpreting fences, size of field, width

> of roads. Reading roofs. What is poor? How many cooking pots indicate upward mobility? What does the good life smell like in dire circumstances? The yardsticks for such things enter our minds only offline, through observing and comparing. (Wiedemann, 2004)

Not all global info-elites, to be sure, can be accused of lacking ties to the local sphere. Yet it must be acknowledged that the Internet represents various forms of media-based or, to some extent, interpersonal media-based communication. The perception of distance characteristic of the Internet certainly differs from that of the large media and its international reporting, as the Internet is interactive, can be selected by the user herself, and is based on a highly diversified range of options. Yet this is a new epistemological problem on its own, for the concept of "confidence in the source" is shaken to its roots on the Internet. How credible is the information obtained from far-off lands? There is no quality control on the Internet.

The Internet is capable not only of generating a global public sphere; it can also tear it down again. Of the various forces present on the Internet, many are almost unknown in their own country. NGOs that appear influential and deserving of support as a result of skillful media tactics are in reality, quite often, minor political players. Such uncertainties have become a serious problem whenever attempts are made to initiate and develop alliances via the Internet.

It would certainly be unfair to talk of an antinomy between globalization and experience – yet the notion resonates nonetheless. It is no accident that the Internet is closely bound up with concepts such as "virtuality." People who spend a lot of time romping around in the global spaces of the Internet can expand their knowledge of the world in all directions. But there is no guarantee of authenticity and of any kind of "glocalized" and hybrid cultures bringing about meaningful system changes.

System Change II: From the "Zapatista Effect" to "Arabellion"

When Charlotte Wiedemann talks of the virtual political opposition, she is touching upon another key myth of the Internet: the notion of a "global civil society" cooperating across national borders to promote human rights and democracy worldwide. Since it first spread on a massive scale, the Internet, and particularly the social web – Facebook, blogs, Twitter, YouTube, and so on – have been bound up with the idealized notion that it is a driving force and catalyst of global democracy. These web sites are often thought to be realizing the Brechtian aspiration of a media transformed from an "apparatus of distribution" into a "public apparatus of communication" (see Brecht, 1967). Berthold Brecht, the communist, had assailed the media world, dominated as it was by monopolistic tendencies of the state and capital. Press barons such as Alfred Hugenberg and state radio stations encouraged, as one would say nowadays, a "one-way flow of communication," thus turning the

citizens of the Weimar Republic into passive consumers of information. The Internet now appears to be disrupting this one-way informational street as a result of its interactive nature. Many of the key thinkers writing about the Internet can even envisage a society featuring constant plebiscitary votes online and virtual party conferences (Leggewie & Maar, 1998).

At an international level, the Internet and the social web lend credence to the notion of an international alliance of social movements and democratic forces (Tsagarousianou, Tambini, & Brian, 1998; van de Donk, Loader, Nixon, & Rucht, 2004). At the interface between globalization and democratization, the "small medium" of the Internet obviously rests on premises very different from those of the traditional mass media:

- the authoritarian state finds the Internet more difficult to censor and control;
- as a low-budget medium, the Internet is accessible to the most varied range of political groups;
- even smaller political groupings have a public impact, rather than coming to grief on the news threshold of the large media;
- journalism no longer functions as the "gatekeeper" for authoritarian states;
- the uniform platform of the World Wide Web makes it easier for social and political movements to pursue strategies of internationalization and to form alliances.

The Internet is a melting pot of information on the political situation in almost every country in the world. It demonopolizes access to political information and gives rise to new discourses on issues of democratization. Innumerable shades of political discourse exist, because the Net provides space to every political group, and even to individual expressions of political opinion – an achievement with which traditional media cannot compete. Most people do not use the Internet to inform themselves about political matters. Nonetheless, the medium has developed into an information pool where many information portals or the social web engage in a political debate; this constitutes an alternative to established media, at least for interested informational elites.

Opposition forces, banned from the mass media in many countries, are successfully articulated on the Internet. It is thus an important informational hub linking political activists, the public sphere, and the citizens. Again and again, the hope has been expressed within the globalization debate that the Internet is changing the composition of social movements, the forms of their political activities, and their power to mobilize. This found expression in the Arab uprisings and revolutions of 2010 and 2011, which have therefore been called the first "Facebook revolutions." Despite the great political potential of the Internet, there is still a certain ambiguity among academics about the exact role played by the Internet and the social web in political transformation (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Morozov, 2011). During the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, the Internet was important in the preliminary and early stages of the rebellions. After the failure of a number

of uprisings in the Arab world – such as the Kifaya movement and worker unrest in Egypt in earlier years – the first demonstrations of January 25, 2011 in Egypt were, for example, organized online. But the protests rapidly took on a life of their own, and real street protests and spontaneous gatherings became more significant. Further, we should not underestimate the role of the major mass media, above all the broadcaster Al Jazeera, particularly given that in Egypt 40 percent of the people are illiterate and can be reached chiefly through word-of-mouth propaganda or television (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Lynch, 2011). Finally, the fact that a regime was first overthrown in Tunisia created a demonstration effect for other Arab states, without which even the most extensive Internet activities would probably have come to nothing. It is because of Tunisia that there were uprisings, on as large a scale as those in Egypt, in states such as Libya and Syria, where Internet penetration was negligible, though military and infrastructural problems hampered or prevented successful revolutions.

The mobilization of small, active informational elites is not a new feature of political transformation. The history of the pamphlet is, after all, several thousand years old. Yet there is an important difference between the conventional alternative and samizdat media on the one hand and the Internet on the other. The conventional small media tend not to cross the borders of the country involved and are almost impossible to access internationally, and thus they fail to open up genuine opportunities to link the opposition with sympathizers abroad. The Internet meanwhile offers unique opportunities for political self-presentation within a global space. Content may be formulated in English or in various other languages and thus gain attention the world over, which in turn allows quite different oppositional strategies from those that are possible without the Internet. This, at least, is a significant component of the myth making involved in globalization.

But what is the nature of the small, yet subtle distinction between the media? How significant is the Internet really, when it comes to forming international alliances and shaping politics? In theory at least, the medium gives political activists the chance to feed important information into political networks and to influence their domestic government like a global "boomerang" of political communication (Sikkink & Keck, 1998). If communication between ruler and ruled is blocked by censorship, political messages can be sent beyond the national borders, to increase pressure on the domestic government via the indirect route of the global public sphere. There are plenty of examples of this procedure. When, for instance, the Tunisian journalist Tawfiq Ben Brik went on hunger strike in the summer of 2000, in protest against persecution by the Ben Ali regime, a campaign of solidarity quickly sprang to life on the Internet, helping ensure that this case, unlike many others of a similar kind, ended happily.

The so-called "Zapatista effect" is surely the example of a boomerang mechanism mentioned quite often (Cleaver, 1998; Rondfeldt, 1998). Through its Internet presence, the rebellion organized by the Zapatista movement in the Chiapas region of Mexico, which started in the mid-1990s, captured the attention of the world. A detailed look at this case, however, points to special circumstances.

The effect was anchored in an alliance between the national resistance movement and the anti-globalization movement. The Chiapas rebellion was elevated by the latter to the status of a central symbol of opposition to an unjust world order. Other Mexican provinces, suffering from the same problems, remained largely unnoticed. This is evidence of the significance of the Internet, but it also underlines the special circumstances under which this alliance was formed. It was not the Zapatistas themselves who set the boomerang effect in motion: the initiative came from the outside, from the ranks of a transnationally coordinated protest movement, which took shape around the WTO (World Trade Prganization) summit in Seattle in 1999. Other opposition movements have a much harder time gaining an international response and often go under amid the general cacophony produced by the torrent of information.

One series of events that had little difficulty gaining international attention was that of the Arab revolutions of 2010 and 2011, which, despite having broken out in winter, are paradoxically referred to as "the Arab Spring." Here again, despite the worldwide attention, we must challenge the notion of a general "globalization" of the uprisings via the Internet. In many respects, it was Arab Facebook groups that initiated the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. The main trend toward cross-border communication, however, occurred within a regional framework and incorporated the worldwide Arab diaspora (Harb, 2011). Regional groups that had already existed for some time – such as Cyberdissidents.com, a coalition of Middle Eastern Internet activists – played a significant role. The growing importance of the Arab language as the lingua franca of Internet activists was an expression of the regionalization or geocultural spread of political activism in the Arab-speaking world. This border crossing was helpful in evading national censorships, but, as regimes fell, most Arab activists had better things to do than communicate with Net activists from the West.

The very fact that the Net was used in the context of dynamic uprisings meant that – however active the worldwide Internet community may have been – the discursive connections and processes of communitization were limited beyond the borders of the Arab world. The Arab Spring occurred, and is still occurring, under very different initial conditions from those of the Chiapas rebellion in Mexico, because in this case the *focal point* of the Internet movement lay outside of Mexico, in the international, mainly English-speaking Net. A country like Egypt, center of the Arab blogging movement more than a decade later, had very different opportunities for online activism from those of the Zapatistas in the 1990s. The Arab rebellions certainly reverberated across the Internet, but the core of online activism, the concrete planning and carrying out of real-world protests, was clearly driven by Arabs. The contrast between the Zapatista movement and the "Arabellion" illustrates the shift from an English-speaking Net controlled mainly by the West toward a decentralized one, based around a regional language.

Yet the Arab Spring did entail a number of truly "global" phenomena. The Arab Net activists were quick to try to attract the attention of the global public in

English, though it would be wrong to suggest that this brought much pressure to bear on Western politicians, who were very slow in supporting the Arab revolutionaries. The fall of the Mubarak regime was achieved despite the lack of any clear Western policy stance. What was interesting, then, was not so much the interactive "boomerangs" (Sikkink & Keck, 1998) as the help provided by the international Net community in the form of technical provision of services. During those stages of the Arab uprisings in which the Internet was blocked by authoritarian states, a group of German Net activists, for example, helped Egyptians and Syrians achieve online anonymity and brought indigenous activists back online via international connections (Reissmann & Rosenbach, 2011). Google and Twitter provided special services such as "Speak-2-Tweet," which allowed people to reach an answering machine via landlines and to leave behind political messages, some of which were transcribed and posted online.

Conclusion

All the problems we have looked at – from linguistic ability and the digital divide through the issue of the global perception of distance and quality control to the Internet's negligible capacity to mobilize at the national and international level – cast some doubt on the vision of a global public sphere, let alone the emergence of an Internet-based "global village" of the kind once imagined by famous Canadian media studies scholar Marshal McLuhan (1967). The world in the Internet age has moved closer together in many ways, but this closeness is deceptive and – where it exists at all – limited to specific events, language areas, regions, and an informational elite, although a growing one, that can afford Internet access. For brief moments – revolutions, world events – the world may even appear to be a village, but these moments pass quickly and in everyday life it is local and regional circumstances that usually dominate. The "global village" of the Internet then emerges as a vast and complex "global mega city."

Translated by Alex Skinner

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This is a revised, updated, and extended version of Chapter 5 in Hafez, 2007.

Note

1 For an introduction to the UNL system, see http://www.unlweb.net/unlweb (accessed January 4, 2012).

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Part V

Theory Case Studies

36

Nationalism and Imperialism

Mingsheng Li

Introduction

Nationalism is a product of modernity with a history of more than 250 years of economic, political, cultural, and social transformations. It has played an important role in mobilizing political support not only throughout the twentieth century but on into the twenty-first: in seeking hegemony for global and regional powers; and in rationalizing national liberation, anti-colonialist, and anti-imperialist movements for developing countries across the globe. The importance of the multifaceted and dynamic propensity of nationalism cannot be overrated. Nationalism, anchored in cultural values, beliefs, economy, history, religion, ethnicity, technology, and geopolitics, contributes to many, if not all, contemporary problems in domestic affairs and in international relations. People's perceptions and understanding of the world are influenced by nationalism, which provides ideology and molds the behavior of individuals and citizens.

Nationalism exists in all nations and states in different faces, which vary from country to country. The sources and forms of China's nationalism, for example, are extremely different from those of the United States. China's nationalism is largely a product of China's reactive response to hostile and aggressive external forces, and thus it is a mixture of pride in its history and culture and the feeling of "a century of humiliation" at the hands of Japan and Western powers. America's nationalism, on the other hand, has been formed and reinforced by its pride in the success in imperial expansion, economy, technology, ideology, and culture. It will be argued that American nationalism has been instrumentalized to rationalize and fuel America's imperial ideology, exceptionalism, militarism, and humanitarian intervention. Different sources and forms of nationalism often present problems for international communication in international relations and business activities. The ability to manage both the positive and the negative

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sides of nationalism to serve the national and international interests will be a leadership requirement for world leaders.

This chapter will review the theoretical concepts about the nature of nationalism and its relationship with imperialism. It will analyze the many facets of American nationalism and imperialism and Chinese nationalism. The end of the chapter will discuss how to manage nationalism for the benefits of humanity.

The Concept of Nationalism and Its Relationship with Imperialism

A comprehensive review of theories of nationalism is a daunting task. The literature surrounding theories of nationalism involves many academic disciplines, such as cultural anthropology, social psychology, sociology, history, political science, geopolitics, and international politics. Defining nationalism is notoriously difficult, as the various definitions of what constitutes a nation can lead to different forms of nationalism in different contexts and each one can be interpreted from different perspectives by people with different orientations. Calhoun (1997, p. 123) argues that

> Nationalism is too diverse to allow a single theory to explain it all. Much of the contents and specific orientation of various nationalisms is determined by historically distinct cultural traditions, the creative actions of leaders, and contingent situations within the international world order.

There is no consensus among scholars and researchers as to what constitutes nationalism. For example, in the long debate about nation and nationalism, no agreement has been reached: which came first, the nation or nationalism? For nationalists, the nation came first. Hobsbawm (1992), for example, argues that the French state preceded the French nation, not French nationalism – which emerged later, at the end of the nineteenth century. Hastings (1997, p. 9) concurs that the nation gives rise to nationalism and nationalism in turn demands a nation to "advance the supposed interests of its own 'nation-state' regardless of other consideration." For others, like Smith (1998), nationalism invents nations if they do not exist. Gellner (2006, p. 54) also asserts that "it is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round." As a political ideology, nationalism requires a national identity and the existence of a political entity defined in terms of state, nation-state, nation, ethnicity, and national identity. Before proceeding any further into the investigation, it is necessary to define and disentangle in explicit terms each of these interconnected concepts.

Marchetti (2005, p. 493) depicts a *state* as "a legal concept describing a social group that occupies a defined territory and is organized under common political institutions and effective government." Runciman (2003, p. 37) argues that a state is fictional and "it owes both its existence and its power to the fact that it is never

to be identified with anyone, anything, in particular." Howison (2006) insists that a state is unreal and exists mainly as a mental construct. A state that gains enough legitimacy (that is, loyalty) to represent a nation is a *nation-state*. It is a sovereign state consisting of one or more nationalities, in a formal political union. It has the capacity to determine the official language(s), to manage its own legal, educational, bureaucratic, currency, and defense systems, to grant citizenship, to consolidate its national unity in social, cultural, and economic life, and to enter relationships with other states or countries. In Howison's argument, "a sovereign state exists in an abstract, legal way as a political system with a permanent population, government, international recognition and a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within an exclusive territory" (p. 1).

Smith (1991, p. 14) defines a *nation* as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy, and common legal rights and duties for all members." Miller (1993) adds some elements to the definition: a nation is a community based on values, common belief, common history, language, associations, culture, homeland, and traits. In Weber's (1946, p. 179) view, "a nation is a community of sentiment," the sentiment of solidarity of an ethnic community of common descent, homogeneity, and a collective "mission" that gives meaning to the sociocultural and national identity of the community. Anderson (1991, p. 6) defines the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." It is imagined because the members of the community cannot possibly know each other. National consciousness is aroused and members of the imagined community become aware of their sense of belonging through access to particular script languages, to communications systems, and to the printing press. Therefore the concept of the nation is subjective, "anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the culture values that are to be preserved and developed" (Kohn, 1944, p. 10). According to Hroch (1993, p. 5), a nation is associated with the following three irreplaceable characteristics:

1 a "memory" of some common past, treated as a "destiny" of the group – or at least of its core constituents;
2 a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it;
3 a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.

A nation, Howison writes (2006, p. 1), "is a common identity which demands political loyalty." Geller (2006) concludes that, when culture and polity become congruent, nations should become states and states should become nations.

For Smith (1998), nations have "ethnic origins" and therefore there is an intrinsic relationship between ethnicity and state. Hroch (1993, p. 6) also believes that national consciousness emerges in the ethnic group at large; therefore nations and ethnicities are closely related. Horowitz (1985, pp. 18–19) defines *ethnicity* as the

feature of a group that distinguishes itself on the basis of "ascriptive differences, whether the indicium of group identity is color, appearance, language, religion, some other indicators of common origin, or some combination thereof." Therefore there is an intrinsic relationship between ethnicity and state, which leads to two forms of nationalism: ethnic nationalism, which refers to an existing ethnic group striving to attain and consolidate its nationhood; and sate nationalism, which refers to an existing state trying to achieve goals such as unification or nation-building independence and sovereignty (Smith, 1998). Hastings (1997, p. 10) draws a clear distinction between a nation and an ethnicity: "A nation is a far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity. Formed from one or more ethnicities it possesses or claims the right to political identity and autonomy as a people, together with the control of specific territory."

Spencer and Wollman (2005, p. 4) assert that "successful nations have to be constructed on the basis of a pre-existing ethnic core," in which "nationalism can mobilize effectively." They explain that a major source of the appeal of nationalism lies in its construction of the national identity on the basis of the feelings, ethnic consciousness, and long history of *ethnies* – that is, ethnic communities that are tied to each other, share beliefs, heritage, history, ancestors, myths, symbols, and a particular place. Eriksen (2005, p. 146) supports the view that "the majority of nationalisms are ethnic in character." In monoethnic societies a nationalist ideology is also an ethnic ideology; in polyethnic societies, Eriksen notes, nationalism is represented as a universalist, supra-ethnic ideology that adopts the principles of justice and equal rights for everybody.

Nationalism is one of the most important ideologies in modernity (Gellner, 2006). It is a political ideology or set of ideas designed to unite and sustain ties between diverse ethnicities, mobilize the masses through its political power, create a strong sense of shared national identity, and provide a solid basis of trust between citizens who are willing to sacrifice for others (Hroch, 1993). Smith (1991, p. 73) defines it as "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation." Llobera (1998, p. 209) refers to it as "a doctrine and a movement designed to promote and to safeguard the existence of a nation." He maintains that, to understand the meaning of nationalism, it is important to have a good knowledge of the two salient features of nationalism: "the sacred character of the nation" and "the will of the people to defend the sense of cultural community" (p. 208). Nationalism, Berberoglu (2004, p. 3) suggests, "can be studied much as religion, values and culture." Breuilley (1993, p. 1), on the other hand, treats nationalism primarily as a form of politics, "as a state of mind, as an expression of national consciousness, as a political doctrine elaborated by intellectuals" in the search for a national identity. He emphasizes that attempts to focus the study and analysis of nationalism on culture, ideology, identity, and class, though they are important, would neglect the fundamental nature of nationalism, which involves two purposes: (1) seeking or exercising political or state power to pursue its objectives;

and (2) justifying such action through a political doctrine built upon the following basic assertions:

1 There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
2 The interest and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
3 The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of national sovereignty. (Breuilley, 1993, p. 2)

The discourse of nationalism, according to Kedourie (1960, p. 9), can be interpreted from three propositions: "that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government."

Similarly, Kohn (1968, p. 63) views nationalism as a doctrine and as a political creed that "centers the supreme loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the people upon the nation-state, either existing or desired." Smith (1996) says that both the nation and nationalism should be taken as social constructs and cultural creations, and understood by looking at particular historical social and cultural contexts. Social contracts such as the myths, memories, symbols and ceremonies can "provide the sole basis for … social cohesion and political action" (Smith, 1995, p. 155).

Hao (2010, pp. 16–19) has identified four pure and four mixed forms of nationalism: (1) *individualistic nationalism*, which emphasizes "human rights, liberty, and equality … in liberal democratic institutions" – as found in Taiwan; (2) *collectivistic nationalism*, sometimes called official nationalism, which places the interests of the nation over the interests of the individual, as Chinese and American nationalisms do; (3) *civic nationalism*, which respects the individual, involves self-identification with the nation, and is committed to its political principles; (4) *ethnic nationalism*, which stresses "ascriptive characteristics, natural qualities inherent in one's very being," and inclusion and exclusion on the basis of cultural and ethnic identities. The other four types of nationalism are mixtures of these four pure types: individualistic civic nationalism, collectivistic civic nationalism, individualistic ethnic nationalism, and collectivistic ethnic nationalism.

Scholars often treat nationalism and imperialism as being in antithesis (Weeks, 1996). This can be misleading. Nationalism and imperialism are interrelated; even more, they are closely tied to each other. It was nationalist ideology that shaped the forms of imperialism that forcibly extended the political rule to underdeveloped territories in all parts of the globe during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Lichtheim (1971, p. 81) considers modern imperialism as an ideology "latched onto nationalism." He theorizes that "nationalism transformed itself into imperialism wherever the opportunity offered," and such popular nationalism was often manipulated by interested groups and corrupted into imperialist expansion.

Mommsen (1980, p. 71) describes imperialism "as extreme nationalism and as a phenomenon of power politics." He states that, from 1870s onwards, nationalism has been "an important element in the ideology of imperialism" (p. 73) and that

popular nationalism provides an ideology and "a motive force of modern imperialist domination, whether formal or informal" (p. 71) and endlessly projects imperialist power and influence beyond its own existing boundaries. The nationalist sentiments and enthusiasm of the broad masses, politicians, bankers, and business people – as well as those of the elites, who have benefited much from the economic gains and advantages offered by nationalistic projects – will persuade the governments to pursue imperialist policies. Nationalism as a political idea of imperialism legitimizes vigorous territorial expansion overseas, by force or other means, "as a necessary means of preserving and strengthening the national spirit" (p. 7). It has become the "strongest driving force of state imperialism" and the "new psychic [force] of modern Europe," and thus imperialism has been interpreted as an expression of nationalism (Salz, quoted in Mommsen, 1980, pp. 7–8).

American Imperialism and Facets of American Nationalism

Smith (1981, p. 6) defines imperialism as "the effective domination by a relatively strong state over a weaker people whom it does not control as it does its home population, or as the effort to secure such domination." Imperialism involves an extension of the sovereignty of a nation-state beyond its own territorial boundary, either through territorial acquisition or through the establishment of economic, cultural, linguistic, financial, and political hegemony over other nation-states. Hardt and Negri (2000) conceptualize *empire* thus:

- a regime that crosses all the spatial boundaries and rules over the entire world;
- a regime that transcends temporal boundaries;
- a regime whose rule operates across all social, cultural, political spheres; and
- a regime dedicated – through force, if necessary – to a new world order and to a perpetual and universal world peace.

Harvey (2003) argues that imperialism is associated with capitalism in different states and therefore has different shapes. Tully (2008) describes USA's new imperialism as a traditionally informal, noncolonial imperial rule over other sovereign states, imposed by means of hard and soft power, through military threats and intervention, and through the imposition of political ideology and cultural values such as democracy, freedom, and liberty. As a primary unilateral imperial leader, the United States may work with or against other states or great powers and transnational corporations, control, dominate, and manipulate them, or operate through international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The informal imperial rule is "backed up by the full spectrum global dominance of the US military and its coalition of willing and unwilling allies, proxies and dependencies" (Tully, 2008, p. 128). Ignatieff (2003) calls America's empire "an empire elite" – a global hegemony featuring free markets, human rights, and democracy, all enforced through militarism.

America's temporary empire, Ignatieff argues, is incompatible with the democracy that the US has promulgated. Hardt and Negri (2000) agree that American imperialism, through its different forms of domination, oppression, exploitation, and heavy coercion, can wield enormous power of destruction across the globe.

The very term *imperialism* nowadays carries unflattering connotations; it appears to designate something repulsive, ominous, aggressive, and repressive. Some Americans develop an aversion to the term, which may represent an insult to them. There is a fear that embracing an imperialist stance would invite problems and cause backfire or blowback. Most Americans tend to deny the bellicose and negative side of the nation's imperialist practices. In 1999 Samuel Berger, President Clinton's national security adviser, declared in a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations that "the United States is the first global power in history that is not an imperial power" (Luke, 2009, p. 22). US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also denied that the USA was an empire: "We don't seek empires. We're not imperialistic. We never have been" (Boot, 2003). George W. Bush, too, rejected the imperial idea: "America has never been an empire … We may be the only great power in history that had the chance, and refused" (Luke, 2009, p. 22).

Ricks (2001) insists, however, that the US has in practice acted in an imperialist fashion in the past decades and that it should continue to embrace the role. Golub (2003) concurs that the United States has been in effect a full-fledged empire for a century, as the heart of world capitalism since the early 1920s, as a predominant military and technological power after World War II, and as a locus of "high" and "low" cultural modernity since 1950s. Johnson (2006) adds that in the past imperialism could be traced by counting up colonies, but American imperialism is to be traced by counting up the number of military bases and installations inside and outside the US and by viewing the imperial influences of its global politics, ideology, economy, and cultural values. There were 737 American military bases (air force, army, navy, communication, and spy) in more than 120 foreign lands in 2005, with more than 255,000 military personnel deployed in 156 countries – not to mention 969 bases inside the 50 states, numerous secret bases, and armed presence in space and on the sea (Boggs, 2004; Peterson III, 2004). These forces have been deployed to deter, compel, and coerce potential rivals and enemies in four critical regions: Europe, Northeast Asia (South Korea and Japan), East Asia (the Taiwan Strait), and the Middle East (see Johnson, 2006). Mann (2005, p. 9) believes that American imperialists prefer to "see their goals as entirely benign" and that they like the term *empire* to connote "noble, civilizing, even humanitarian sentiments" and the prospect of bringing "peace, freedom and democracy to the world." In this sense, Mann claims, a new American empire as such would be appreciated. Healy (1970, p. 19) assures us that the United States is "a great imperial Republic, destined to exercise a controlling influence upon the actions of mankind and to affect the future of the world as the world was never affected, even by the Roman Empire." Williams (1962, p. 19) finds that Americans already regarded their country "as an empire at the very outset of their national existence – as part of the assertive self-consciousness which culminated in the American Revolution."

Such self-consciousness – expressed in the ideas of universalism, exceptionalism, and messiah missions as well as in the notion that America is the "indispensable

nation" – fosters an American nationalism that legitimates all imperialistic practices (Golub, 2003; McCartney, 2004). After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, American nationalism has become stronger as a contender for European hegemony, and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks as a contender for the United States' emergence as the sole global superpower. It is associated with the prestige that America enjoys as an unrivalled unipolar actor that can establish "the rules of the game" by which other powers play (Mann, 2005). American nationalism is fuelled by the perception that the US is the sole superpower without rivals and that "no country has been as dominant culturally, economically, technologically and militarily in the history of the world since the late Roman Empire" (p. 10). There is no doubt that the new American imperialism is a reality. Like two sides of a coin, American nationalism and American imperialism become interdependent and reinforce each other. Mann is concerned that the American Empire will in the end "turn out to be a military giant, a Back-seat economic driver, a political schizophrenic and ideological phantom" (p. 13).

Fuller (2006, p. 2) points out that most Americans would like to identify with patriotism rather than with nationalism, which is "characterized as archaic, narrow, intolerant, racist, zealous, irrational, uncompromising." However, he says, the United States is one of the most enthusiastically nationalist states in the world, although American people often fail to recognize their own strong nationalism. He emphasizes that American patriotism is functionally the same as nationalism to the outside world. Pei (2003) agrees that both terms are indistinguishable so far as their psychological manifestations and their impact on foreign policymaking go. In Hao's view, patriotism, which means unconditional love for and devotion to one's country, "is based on a nationalistic ideology, an 'us' versus 'them' ideology," and serves as the bonding and binding for the community (Hao, 2010, p. 4). Hao compares nationalism with the roots and patriotism with the fruits: patriotism is the emotion and passion fueled by nationalism.

American government officials and politicians often exploit nationalism to justify their global agenda. In Lieven's (2004) view, Americans are led by the country's elite to believe that nationalism for the purpose of imperialism is good for the national interests. Corporatelycontrolled mass media play a central role in shaping American nationalist mentality and in constructing and maintaining American myths and identities. American nationalism, derived from pride, victory, and triumph, is based on political ideology and cultural values rather than on ethnicity and race (Faruqui, 2003; Pei, 2003). Its main features can be analyzed along five key dimensions: universalism, exceptionalism, militarism, securitization, and humanitarian intervention. These are not mutually exclusive. Instead they are interconnected, overlapping, and mutually inclusive.

Universalism

McCrisken (2003, p. 7) maintains that American nationalism is built on the notion of a "universal message," the universal application of American values and principles. American nationalists hold the view that America's culture is a "universal culture"

that represents the norms of all other cultures (Fuller, 2006, p. 4). American national identity is premised on the nation's binding principles being shared by all people (McCartney, 2004). Americans would like to think of their political model of liberal democracy as exceptional and as one that, in consequence, the world should adopt. They are inclined to promote American values of liberalism, democracy, human rights, and rule of law through inducement or by force (Chollet & Lindberg, 2007), and eventually to build a liberal empire. Such cultural universalism is often associated with modernity, progress, democracy, equality, sophisticated business practice, and high morality. Therefore it is the moral obligation of the US to save the world and transform it into a modern and free one – a world based on American universal cultural values. A clear example is the statement made by Woodrow Wilson during World War I: "America had the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world" (Lieven, 2004, p. 33). Former American President G. W. Bush expressed his nationalistic views in one of his speeches: "we did not ask for this mission, yet there is honor in history's call" (Faruqui, 2003).

American nationalists' firm belief in the supremacy of and success in their political ideology, culture, army, economy, and technology convince all Americans to export their universal values to the rest of the world. Such a belief and the actual routine practices associated with it generate strong national pride, which in turn reinforces nationalism. The notion of cultural universalism influences American foreign policy. In theory and in practice, the United States uses its norms and principles to guide and govern the world, "as the figurehead and the governor of the new order" (McCartney, 2004, p. 402). Believing that it is itself the center of the international system and that it has been chosen to lead the world (which was corrupted through darkness), the United States sets out to build a new world order to realize "humanity's promise" under its own leadership and domination (McCartney, 2004, p. 421).

Exceptionalism

Exceptionalism is the belief that the United States is qualitatively different from, namely superior to, other nations. The belief in American exceptionalism forms an essential element of American nationalism. McCrisken (2003, p. 2) identifies two main strains of American exceptionalist thought: "One is that of the United States as an exemplar nation, as reflected in ideas such as the 'city upon a hill'"; and the other strain portrays it as a missionary nation, "as represented by the ideas of 'manifest destiny,' 'imperialism,' 'internationalism,' 'leader of the free world,' 'modernization theory,' and the 'new world order.'" Such self-referential genius and uniqueness embedded in the American core values are perceived to justify American leadership and dominance in world affairs (McCrisken, 2003).

Lepgold and McKeown (1995, p. 369) hold that Americans, strongly believing in American exceptional values, "make moralistic judgments about other people's domestic systems, and believe that liberal values transfer readily to foreign affairs." American exceptionalism tends to consider that the US is empowered to judge, award, and punish what other countries have done and to believe that American

"economic and political values are destined to shape the future of human mankind" (Buzan, 2004, p. 155). It predisposes more toward unilateralism than toward multilateralism. A tension exists between what the United States promotes and what it actually does. It often pushes to exempt itself from rules and responsibilities, and it "will make exaggerated claims to special rights on the basis of its unique position and role" (Buzan, 2004, p. 165). For example, the United States rejected the Kyoto Protocol on environment emissions, the biotechnology weapons convention, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the anti-missile defense treaty. American exceptionalism was exploited to justify the invasion of Iraq even if no weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were found. The US and its allies possess WMD, but other states are not allowed to possess similar weapons. For example, the US and its allies claim to be leaders of democratic human rights "while pursuing foreign policies that ignore, support or instigate their abuse and subvert international human rights institutions when it suits their economic and geopolitical interests" (Tully, 2008). The US imposes the doctrine of the free market model on those who are too weak to resist, but it adopts the policy of protectionism to erect trade barriers on those who are economically strong.

Militarism

The 9/11 terrorist attack attracted widespread outpouring empathy from around the world, fuelled American nationalism, and invigorated the American conviction that manifest destiny had summoned the American state to fight against terrorism, redefine the global order, and "raise up a universal civilization on American norms" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 13) so as to reduce the level of hostility. High on the agenda was the implementation of the imperial grand strategy aiming to build the most powerful military force in history in order to deter any potential enemy and "to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States" (Chomsky, 2003, p. 11). To maintain American supremacy, it is important to deter "potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role" (Mann, 2005, p. 2). The grand strategy entails American hegemony and the right to undertake a preventive war without any UN authorization, on any sovereign state perceived to be a threat to the country. The world is thus subject to being ruled by force rather than by law or by any established institutions. Bacevich (2005, p. 14) notes that the American history of imperial expansion has shown that the country's elites, "political leaders, liberals and conservatives alike, became enamored with military might." He further argues that militarism has become a shared belief among disparate groups – military officers or intellectuals, politicians or strategists, bankers or clerks; they all are convinced that military power is "the apparent answer to any number of problems" (p. 6).

The global armaments industry is monopolized by the United States. According to *The Economist* online (June 8, 2011), American defense spending in 2010, nearly $700 billion, is bigger than that of the next 17 countries combined: China is trailing far behind, with an estimated $119 billion. Delizo (2010) states that

corporations related to the networks of defense are "the US economy's top superprofit earners which keep US social-economic foundation intact and running." Grimmett (2011) reports that the United States ranked first in 2010, with $21.3 billion, 52.7 percent of the global market share in arms transfer agreements to both developed and developing countries. Ranking second in such worldwide arms transfer agreements in 2010 was Russia, with $7.8 billion or 19.3 percent of the market share. Grimmett (2011) finds that the values of American foreign arms transfer agreements comprised 76.2 percent in developing countries in 2010. American military expansion and monopoly, Peterson III (2004), emphasizes, are to maintain the US hegemony and its "Romanesque Pax Americana Imperium." With the largest military and these exorbitantly expensive forces, Americans believe that their security, the values they uphold, and their ways of life can be guaranteed. Peterson III (2004) claims that the United States is economically addicted to war, and so its political and economic systems are "dominated by the military–industrial complex and its mafiosiesque war-profiteers." He further contends that the American military–industrial complex and big businesses, corporations, and local industries all benefit from the American war machine. Lucrative warfare, Peterson III says, "produces a stimulative 'high' for the predator's domestic economy," but it ravages the economy of the victimized countries.

Securitization

The concept of securitization, first introduced by Ole Wæver in 1995, is based on an understanding that security at both the state and international levels should be understood as an intersubjective rather than objective condition of being under real or perceived threats. Securitization will result in shared goals, consensus-based actions, us/them otherization, anxiety, ingroup solidarity, and negative outgroup stereotypes and prejudice. It shapes America's foreign and national security policy and justifies its militarism and relentless pursuit of reordering the world to protect its geopolitical, strategic, and economic interests. The problem of national security has been one of the motives behind militarism. The American government has emphasized emerging security threats such as terrorism, biological weapons, and information warfare. In the foreseeable future, no adversaries can challenge or match the US military. American officials believe that the United States is invincible, and yet absolute security is required. As Chace and Carr (1988, p. 12) note, "for over two centuries the aspiration toward an eventual condition of absolute security has been viewed as central to an effective American foreign policy." The demand for absolute security requires the US to identify its potential adversaries, real or imagined, so that counter-measures such as proactive actions, deterrence, pre-emptive and preventive wars can be taken to destroy them. To achieve absolute security, it is essential that US forces deter, compel, and defend – not only against direct and indirect threats to America, but also against threats to the security of allies; in this way it would prevent the domino effect that could infect the stability of the areas (Layne & Schwarz, 1993).

Seeking absolute security also requires the United States to have an absolute domination and control over oil resources in the new center of geopolitical competition, for both economic and national security reasons. In Ignatieff's (2003) argument, the invasion of Iraq was about oil, about "America's consolidating its hegemonic role as the guarantor of stable oil supplies for the Western economy," rather than about human rights and democracy. Klare (2004, p. 52) argues that "whoever controls Persian Gulf oil controls the world's economy and, therefore, has the ultimate lever over all competing powers." Iran, with the third largest oil reserve, could be the next target.

Humanitarian intervention

Marjanovic (2011) sees humanitarian intervention as a notion under which a state uses military force against another state with the aim of ending human rights violations by the state against which the intervention is directed. Holzgrefe (2003, p. 18) refers to it as

> the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of fundamental human rights or individuals other than own citizens, without the permission of the state within whose territory the force is applied.

The definition excludes the use of economic, diplomatic, or other sanctions. Tesón (2005, pp. 2–3) proposes a humanitarian doctrine that can be used in the form of principles and guidelines:

- a justifiable intervention must be aimed at ending tyranny or anarchy;
- in general, only severe cases of anarchy or tyranny qualify for humanitarian intervention;
- the victims of tyranny or anarchy must welcome the intervention; and
- humanitarian intervention should preferably receive the approval or support of the community of democratic states.

Humanitarian intervention is legitimate under the authorization of the UN. There have been many such cases in the post-Cold War period, for instance in Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Liberia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone. The doctrine was endorsed by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit of the UN. However, there is fear of foreign interference in internal affairs in the guise of humanitarian intervention. A recent Pew attitude survey finds that many people fear that the projection of American military strength may lead to "pervasive fears of an unleashed, and unchecked, hyperpower" (Wike, 2011). Chomsky (2008) is highly critical of the emerging intervention formula, which has been used by the United States as a pretext to abuse and subvert human rights and as a legitimizing ideology to pursue its own economic and geopolitical goals and to project its hegemony and influence. Ignatieff (2003) believes that the main goal of American intervention is to increase

its power and influence, which will help the US to obtain what it wants. Ignatieff stresses that there are three motivating factors in the US grand plan: liberal markets, democracy, and a new world order under US imperial rule. A global order of stable nation states, according to Ignatieff, needs to be reconstructed; barriers or threats from rogue states, failed states, and states without democratic institutions must be removed; and regimes in these states must be changed under the pretext of humanitarian intervention. The US thus assumes the privileged noble role of a self-appointed sheriff to set things right and create a safe global context for "the new imperial project – consolidating zones of stability in areas of vital national interest" (Ignatieff, 2003). Nardin (2005) contends that, in the name of humanity, the US considers its moral responsibility to rescue and reshape the world to be based on its grand plan and its imperial prescriptions.

Facets of Chinese Nationalism

The rise of Chinese nationalism is regarded as one of the most important events in international relations in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century (Brittingham, 2007; Zheng, 1999). Unlike American nationalism, which is derived from American imperialist expansion, manifest destiny, global power, and success in science and technology, culture, military, and economy, "China's nationalism today is shaped by its pride in its history as well as its century of humiliation at the hands of the West and Japan" (Bajoria, 2008). Chinese nationalists take pride in the country's 5,000-year civilization and culture, in the glory of its long-gone empire, and in its current rapid economic development as the world's second largest economy and creditor. China portrays itself as a victim of Western imperialism; that began with China's defeat in the Opium War with Britain in 1840–1842. For over a century, from 1840 to 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded, China had experienced numerous invasions and humiliations at the hand of Western and Japanese powers and had been reduced to a semi-colonized and fragmented nation. China's nationalism holds legitimate grievances against Western powers. The narratives of "national humiliation" and victimization have fueled Chinese nationalist sentiments and have generated feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and anxiety. Nathan and Ross (1997, p. 34) have rightly point out: "Many Chinese see themselves as a nation beleaguered, unstable at home because insecure abroad, and vulnerable abroad because weak at home. To them it seems that China is always ready either to fly asunder or to be torn apart."

Callahan (2008) uses the word "pessoptimist" to describe the duality of Chinese nationalism: the coexistence of both optimism and pessimism in "a land of contradictions," with a strong sense of pride and humiliation. Such pessoptimist nationalism, focusing on national humiliation, consumed by Chinese nationals through school education and party-state patriotic education campaigns, often leads to an "aggressive nationalism" that calls for counter-offensive strategies (Callahan, 2008). Chinese pessoptimist nationalists are very sensitive to issues

regarding national insecurity, Chinese collective identity, humiliation, bullying, arrogance, and sense of superiority shown by Western powers.

The study by Townsend (1992) shows that imperial China, which lasted for more than 2,000 years, had never been a nation-state, and there was no sense of national consciousness there. Chinese national identity was primarily associated with culturalism and extreme loyalty to the culture itself, not to the state as defined in Western theories. According to Zhao (2000), China's nationalism emerged in response to foreign invasions and humiliation in the nineteenth century. The concepts of nation-state and nationalism were introduced into China in the late nineteenth century by the Chinese intellectual elite. China's nationalism reached its peak and spread throughout the country in 1919 during the May Fourth Movement, protesting the Treaty of Versailles, which awarded Japan German rights in China's Shangdong Province. The movement gave birth in 1921 to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which saw national salvation as its mission and strove to overthrow the "three big mountains" – imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. Nationalism, permeating all periods of modern Chinese history, has since been instrumentalized by the CCP to legitimize its rule over China, to rally popular support, and to rationalize its domestic and foreign policy. All CCP leaders, in Zhao's argument, have shared a similar view that their mission is to "blot out the humiliation and restore China to its rightful place as a great power" (p. 4). Nationalism has become an ideology and a societal glue sticking the people, society, and the Party (Bajoria, 2008). China's national anthem *March of the Volunteers* is imbued with anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist sentiment, to remind the Chinese citizens that the nation is facing "the gravest danger" of being subjugated by imperialist powers.

The surge of China's nationalism in the post-Cold War era has often been associated with economic growth, national security, sovereignty, and independence, and it is often inflamed by perceived threats from the Western powers, especially the US, in the form of intervention, subversion, peaceful evolution, containment, deterrence, and encirclement. In spite of China's insistence that its rejuvenation and economic growth are peaceful and that China is not a threat to any other country, the US often perceives China's rise, like that of Japan and Germany, as a destabilizing force and as a major threat to international peace and security, and therefore as something that must be contained (Zheng, 1999). For example, Gertz (2000, p. 199) writes:

> The People's Republic of China is the most serious national security threat the United States faces at present and will remain so into the foreseeable future … The reason Americans should take the threat from China so seriously is that it puts at risk the very national existence of the United States.

Such a threat, in Gertz's argument, will disrupt US geostrategic interests in the Pacific region, cause a nuclear war, and undermine the US around the world as a dominant political and military power.

In response to such a perceived threat, viewing China as an immediate and long-term threat to American hegemonic global agenda, the US has used various counter-measures to maintain its global leadership in the world system and to undermine China's interests (Delizo, 2010). The US has used multi-pronged tactics to deter, contain, and encircle China. It is exploiting the differences between China and its neighbors over territorial claims in the South China Sea, sowing discord between them, and taking advantage of it. The US anti-missile systems are deployed in Eastern Europe to target Russia and China (Wu, 2008). It is now important to examine the different dimensions of Chinese nationalism. Zhao (2000) has identified four important dimensions of Chinese nationalism: nativism, ultranationalism, anti-traditionalism, and pragmatism.

Nativism

Zhao (2000) argues that nativism is "anti-imperialist nationalism" that blames the sources of China's weakness on foreign powers bent on subverting Chinese virtues and on undermining Chinese self-esteem and it calls for a return to the roots of Chinese culture, Confucianism. Nativists insist on self-reliance, believing that national regeneration and independence cannot be achieved without rejecting foreign powers and cultural influences. Their goal is to build an independent and powerful China, capable of resisting any foreign threat. Zhao explains that nativists are confrontational and anti-foreign, very sensitive to perceived foreign insults and humiliation. They are particularly hostile to the United States and Japan (Ben-Shmuel, 2010). Nativists hold that their cultural values are superior to those of Western cultures and therefore the Chinese cultural tradition, which is seen as universal human value, should be "the basis for the values of the world in the twenty-first century" (Zhao, 2000, p. 11). One example is the reviving of Confucianism in the last decade. A 9.5-meter-high statue of Confucius was erected in front of the National Museum of China on Beijing's Tiananmen Square; then it was mysteriously removed on March 15, 2011. There are more than 400 Confucius Institutes in more than 70 countries. Extreme nativists will become ultranationalists.

Ultranationalism

Ultranationalism is characterized by superpatriotism, an extreme pride in devotion to the nation, its civilization, culture, and tradition and a strong feeling of national superiority over, dislike for, and fear of other nations. It is deeply entrenched in the us/them dichotomy and highly prejudiced against "the they-group" (Zhao, 2000). The increase in xenophobic and racist diatribes directed against Americans and Japanese in Chinese online chatrooms is an example of Chinese ultranationalism (Liebman, 2007). Ultranationalism is accepted and practiced by some intellectuals, military officers, and diplomats. Normally they have a very strong anti-American sentiment, protesting American interference in Chinese internal and international affairs and American hostility toward China's peaceful rise.

Anti-traditionalism

This is the opposite of nativism. Anti-nationalists identify Chinese tradition and culture as the sources of China's weakness; according to them, the only way to address the problem and to revive China is to adopt Western cultures and economic models (Zhao, 2000). This approach was popular in the 1980s, when China carried out the open-door policy. However, after the June 4 Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, following US sanctions, a halt in the transfer of military technology, and American military threat and hostility toward China, the Chinese anti-traditionalist discourse was challenged and Western models were viewed with suspicion. Many intellectuals, still nationalist at heart, were sensitive to the threat of Western powers and began to shift to other dimensions of the nationalistic discourse. Anti-traditionalism began to lose its appeal in the early twenty-first century, being largely replaced by pragmatic nationalism.

Pragmatism

Zhao (2000) stresses that, since 1980s, pragmatic nationalism has become a predominant political ideology for the Chinese Communist Party and a dominant line of thinking of Chinese people. Pragmatic leaders identify peace and economic prosperity as their major strategic goals and as the key to the nation's modernization and nationalist aspirations. They do all they can to avoid confrontations with world's major powers (Johnson, 2009). Nationalism is often evoked to rally support for the CCP under proper control in order not to jeopardize national stability and international peace. Chinese leaders believe that imperialist and capitalist exploitation, oppression, and cultural infiltration have contributed to China's "political decay, technological backwardness and economic weakness" (Zhao, 2000, p. 8). Behind the use of pragmatic nationalism is the "inferiority complex" on the Chinese psyche, associated with "the century of humiliation" and victimization (Miller, 2010). Chinese pragmatic leaders feel obligated to lead the country to a harmonious and peaceful rise in Asia; pragmatism "seeks to lead through example and [by] offering the alternative to the 'Washington Consensus'" (Miller, 2010). They are overly confident that China can regain its glory through economic growth, by learning from the West and by importing foreign technology (Oksenberg, 1986). While seeing the importance of Western models and ideas, they realize that China must identify with its cultural roots in Confucianism if it is "to reassert itself as the dominant player within the region" (Miller, 2010). The legitimacy of their power depends on the improvement of the population's standards of living, on economic growth and political integrity (Ben-Shmuel, 2010; Zhao, 2000). The main objective of pragmatic nationalism is to serve the national interests, safeguard national security and territorial integrity, maintain independence, and seek national unity and unification. China has resolutely discredited the "China threat" theory and shaped its international relations policy around the strategic goals of a peaceful development philosophy "that embraces economic globalization and the improvement of relations with the rest of the world"

(Johnson, 2009, p. 8). Chinese pragmatic leaders often adopt flexible tactics and subtle strategy in dealing with their foreign counterparts, although sometimes they may appear arrogant and uncompromising (Zhao, 2000).

Chinese pragmatic nationalism is mostly state-led, "situational, more reactive than proactive in international affairs" (Zhao, 2000, p. 2), reflecting Chinese feelings of insecurity from Western pressures, threat, and coercion. Its intensity and scope are in proportion to the Chinese perception of the foreign threat. Gries (2004) suggests that Chinese nationalism is dynamic, evolving, and changing in its international relationships. He warns, however, that it is dangerous for the West to oversimplify Chinese nationalism as "party propaganda," an "instrument" or a "tool" (p. 20). The Chinese people's feelings, their national collective mentality, and their psyche, shaped as it is by its own specific history, should not be overlooked. A series of events in the last two decades are believed to have catalyzed the recent surge of Chinese nationalism: the US aircraft carriers sent to the Taiwan Strait to threaten China in 1996, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the collision of an American EP-3 surveillance plane with a Chinese fighter plane in the South China Sea in May 2001, and a US 5.8 billion package of weapon sales to Taiwan in 2011.

Such hostilities toward China have sparked strong reactions from the Chinese government and have given rise to Chinese intense nationalism. The complex Chinese emotions and patriotic feelings are powerfully articulated through rallies, protests, and online activities. Chinese nationalism has played a critical role in shaping Chinese politics, foreign policies, and the orientation of the country toward the future. When Chinese people feel threatened by external forces, Liu (2004, p. 92) states: "the solidarity among them would be strengthened and nationalism would be a useful tool for the regime to justify its leadership."

For China, the threat is real. Former Chinese President Hu Jintao calls on the Chinese to fight "hostile international powers" (Hu, 2012). He warns: "Hostile international powers are strengthening their efforts to Westernize and divide us. We must be aware of the seriousness and complexity of the struggles and take powerful measures to prevent and deal with them." He stresses that Chinese culture is weak and Western culture is strong, and that "Chinese culture and the overall strength of its international influence is not commensurate with the international status of China." He argues that "ideological and cultural fields are their main targets." President Hu's speech reflects the unyielding disposition of Chinese pragmatic nationalism, which is inclined to reactively respond to the perceived threats from "hostile powers."

Managing Nationalism

The previous discussion shows that nationalism as one of the most important ideologies plays an essential role in shaping people's ideas, national identity, perceptions, and international relations. People understand, interpret, and respond

to world events through their nationalist lens, on the basis of their cultural frameworks, which involve cultural values, beliefs, history, religion, economy, ethnicity, and identity. While constructing the discourse of nationalism, our ethnocentric nationalism can often distort the way we understand and interpret world events and foreign cultures. The major objectives of all forms of nationalism are designed to serve the interests of the state. Although there are many shared interests, there are also differences in different countries' core interests. Such differences, if not recognized, respected, and cautiously handled, can lead to serious conflicts in international affairs.

It is a dangerous game to confront foreign nationalisms with one's own nationalism. Hostility is likely to arise when one sees the other as a threat. As discussed earlier, Chinese reactive pragmatic nationalism, in the perception of China, is being challenged by American nationalism, which sees China as a rising power that must be contained. Misperception of China's nationalism and the containment policy of the US will lead to strong nationalist reaction from China (Zheng, 1999) and to a strong desire on its part to increase its own defense system. Such an entrenched vicious cycle of misperception and mistrust makes self-fulfilling-prophecy a "reality" and becomes a major source of conflicts between countries. Wang (2010) writes:

> China suspects that America seeks to stop China from rising and interprets everything the US does through this lens. America worries about China's nationalism and sees China as a growing power that will challenge its global hegemony. Such mistrust can be a self-fulfilling prophecy and a source of global instability.

China has the second largest world economy and is playing an increasingly important role, as one of the major powers on the world stage. Shambaugh (2010) states: "The US and Europe have a joint desire for China to become a global partner on global issues and contribute considerably more to global governance." This is compatible with China's desire to be accepted as a member among other major powers. However, Chinese leaders, firmly influenced by their pragmatic nationalism, their pride, and their collective memory of historical foreign humiliation, prefer to put their domestic priorities above international ones. Such a strategy reflects China's conflicting identity: aspiring to become a global power and yet hesitant to take a range of global responsibilities. Shambaugh (2010) argues:

> China remains internally oriented, self-preoccupied, pursuing a largely narrow self-interested foreign policy … Beijing lacks confidence to *act* as a great power – particularly in concert with other major powers. China remains hesitant on the international stage, taking baby steps toward being a confident global leader.

In a recent national defense strategy released by the Defense Department, the US has identified China as a potential security threat while declaring Asia as a big geostrategic priority and admitting that the "two countries have a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia and an interest in building a cooperative bilateral relationship" (Defense Department, 2012, p. 2).

China and the US have many things in common and face similar challenges, such as global security threats, financial instability, terrorism, climate change, nuclear proliferation, insecurity of information, natural disasters, public health concerns, and transnational crime. China's pragmatic leaders have tried to ameliorate ties and to maintain a healthy relationship with the US and other major powers (Shambaugh, 2010). China has recognized the importance of its role in international affairs and considers its future and "destiny" to be closely connected with those of the international community. China's State Council issued China's defense strategy in 2010, which expresses China's desire to commit itself to "the new security concepts of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination" (State Council, 2011, p. 3) and to "foster, together with other countries, an international security environment of peace, stability, equality, mutual trust, cooperation and win–win" (p. 5).

Nationalism, if properly handled, can be a powerful tool to help produce positive and desirable outcomes. It is about emotions, feelings, and attitudes of the people involved in the interaction. It is deeply embedded in the perception of their self-image and of the images of others. World leaders and media corporations should encourage the positive side of nationalism. The negative side of nationalism, Brittingham (2007, p. 154) warns, can serve as an intervening variable that may distort reality and fuel mistrust between states and as "a strong motivating factor for the pursuit of aggressive foreign policies toward that other state." Government leaders should realize that nationalism can make people apolitical and that it "is the opiate of the masses" (Broudehoux, 2004, p. 11). There is an urgent need to manage the unstable and multi-faceted nature and the dynamic impact of nationalism to serve the interests of the international community rather than those of a particular country.

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37

Media Control in China

Zheng Li

Background: Media Control Before Economics Reforms

The mass media have long been playing the role of a mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It was not until the economic reforms started, in 1978, that the role of the media has gradually changed. Following Deng Xiaoping's southern tour in 1992, when he spoke about further economic liberalization, the party-state began to loosen its ideological control and accelerated the process of media commercialization. In the late 1990s Chinese government began a process of media conglomeration designed to improve the competitiveness of domestic media organizations, preparing for global competition after China's entrance to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This section will walk you through the creation and development of the communist media by focusing on several crucial years of their history.

Development history of the media

The development of China's current media system paralleled the development of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The propaganda force built and expanded by the party played a crucial role in the party's growth.

Communist leaders had used the press to promote their ideas before the CCP was formally set up. For example, Chen Duxiu, co-founder of the CCP, established the well-known magazine *Xin Qingnian* (*New Youth*) to advocate socialism and Marxism–Leninism, which became very influential during the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The CCP attached great importance to the role of propaganda ever since its founding in 1921. Between 1921 and 1926, the date of its last issue, *Xin Qingnian* published and propagated the predominant views of the party members.

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When the CCP failed in its first attempt to cooperate with the Kuomintang (KMT, China's brand of nationalist party) in 1927, it started to place more emphasis on propaganda, which became part of its larger political work. In the same year the CCP set up its own military force. In 1929 Mao Zedong commented that propaganda work was the most important task of the Red Army (Brady & Wang, 2009). Not long after the establishment of its Jiangxi central revolutionary base area, the party set up its first news agency, the Red China News Agency – the predecessor of the Xinhua Press Agency in 1931. The agency functioned as the Party's "eyes and tongue": it observed what is important for the masses and passed on to them the party's message (Malek & Kavoori, 2000, p. 346). During the anti-Japanese war (1937–1945), the CCP further developed its media institutions in the base areas as well as in other places. In 1941 the newspaper *Jiefang Daily* (*Liberation Daily*) was established in Yan'an; two years later it published a famous editorial entitled "Without the Communist Party There Would Be No New China." Zhou Enlai, one of the founders of the CCP, established the *Xinhua Ribao* (*New China Daily*) in several Kuomintang-controlled areas, having successfully persuaded the nationalist government to do so. Later on this newspaper played a key role in spreading communist ideas, in a major propaganda that occurred soon after Japan's surrender in 1945.

As party tools, the communist media developed at high speed during the Chinese Civil War between the CCP and the Kuomintang (1945–1949). The CCP used these tools to carry out propaganda work. In CCP-controlled areas the media unified the thought of CCP members and ruled the people according CCP policy, so as to maintain strict discipline, while in Kuomintang-controlled areas the CCP skillfully propagated its ideas through political work and with the help of the media, which convinced the majority of the Chinese people to support this party (Brady & Wang, 2009, p. 770). In this way, by the time the CCP came into power, it had already built a well-established foundation for the media system for the coming of the Maoist era.

The pre-reform era

As Chairman Mao Zedong often pointed out, the mass media have four tasks: to "propagandize the policies of the Party, educate the masses, organize the masses, and mobilize the masses" (Lu, 1982, p.138). Soon after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the CCP started building its media infrastructure in order to consolidate its hold on power. The CCP built up a national press network on the foundation of the material and technological infrastructure left over from the former regime (Zhao, 1998). In 1949, the *People's Daily* moved its offices to Beijing and became the organ of the central committee of the CCP at the national level. In the same year the *Guangming Daily* (*Bright Light Daily*) was launched, which was founded by democratic parties and nonpartisan coalitions. Subsequently the CCP committees at the provincial, autonomous regional, and municipal level also set up their party organs respectively. The *Liberation*

Daily (*PLA Daily*), for instance, was set up in 1956, under the direct control of the central military commission. At the same time some political institutions and government organizations began establishing newspapers for particular groups of readers like workers, youth, and women. By 1957 there were in China 341 newspapers at the provincial level, over 936 county newspapers, and 31 minority-language papers (Chang, 1989).

Meanwhile the CCP government also took a series of steps to develop the broadcasting system for the purpose of political penetration. Radio stations were set up at four levels – central, regional, provincial, and municipal, and city – in order to provide nationwide coverage. In the early 1950s the government developed a wired broadcasting system in the countryside, not only as a solution to the problem of insufficient radio facilities, but also for the purpose of enhancing the dissemination of information and the political and cultural education of the masses (Yan, 2000). By the end of 1959 the number of radio stations was as large as 122 (Chang, 1989). In 1958 China's first two television stations – Beijing Television and Shanghai Television – were established, in May and October respectively. By 1961, 26 television stations had been set up (Yan, 2000).

Later on, in 1966, the cultural revolution set in, and it lasted until 1976. During these ten years, newspapers became a battlefield for political confrontations between different groups within the CCP. Major national newspapers such as the *People's Daily* and the *PLA Daily* were involved in this power struggle and pushed the cultural revolution to its extreme. During this period a lot of newspapers were accused of having a human interest or nonpolitical orientation and thus were closed. As a result, by 1967 the number of regular newspapers had fallen to just 43 (Zhao, 1998). This extreme political struggle slowed down the pace of economic development and, where the media were concerned, it brought things to a standstill.

Media Control since 1978

At the end of 1978, two years after the cultural revolution, Deng Xiaoping started a program of economic reforms. A series of transformations – such as the opening up of the country to foreign investment and the privatization of some state-owned business – were carried out with the purpose of turning the existing economy, which was of the planned type, into a market economy. The political and economic environment in China was changed to something described as a "socialism with Chinese characteristics" – or, as many authors preferred to put it, a capitalism with Chinese characteristics – which was unprecedented at the time (Zhao, 2005).

Media marketization, which was part and parcel of this reform, has brought changes to the role of the media. The mass media were no longer instruments for class struggle, as they had been during the cultural revolution. Although they still remained mouthpieces of the party, the media were also promoted as instruments of economic and cultural contribution (Stockmann, 2013). The political atmosphere

created by Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms was comparatively relaxed, which set the pace for a boom in the press and in broadcasting. During the 1980s many newspapers that had suffered the effects of the cultural revolution resumed publication, and a number of new newspapers and journals appeared. By the end of 1988, there were 1,579 newspapers distributed openly throughout the country (Fang & Chen, 1992). Meanwhile radio broadcasting also enjoyed massive growth, thanks to developments in economy and technology during that period. Radio's reach rose to 70.6 percent of the population in 1988, and there were more than 1,200 radio stations operating in the country in the early 1990s (Fang & Chen, 1992; Yan, 2000). A complete national television network was also in place by the early 1980s (Yu, 1990). To enhance television penetration, the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television – the predecessor of the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) – proposed and implemented a four-level framework. Under this strategy, stations were set up at national, provincial, prefectural (or municipal), and county level to provide a mixed coverage of television; they were "aimed particularly at extending television into rural areas and inland provinces" (Yu, 1990, p. 72).

Although state control over the media continued, it was less strict during the first decade of economic reforms, while the government was learning new methods of media control in an "opening-up" political and economic context (He, 2008). The media were promoted as instruments of economic and cultural construction rather than of class struggle (Stockmann, 2013). Yet their freedom was limited: they continued to play the role of mouthpiece throughout this seemingly "golden time for the media."[1] The 1982 Constitution[2] contained a few articles that affirm the right of free expression. Article 35 guaranteed citizens the freedom of expression, press, assembly, association, and demonstration. Article 47 stated that citizens have the freedom to engage in literary and artistic creation and other cultural pursuits. In practice, however, these freedoms are overridden by other clauses – relating to national security, interests of the state, and the primacy of the Communist Party (Trionfi, 1999). Trionfi pointed out that three other articles are more often recalled by the state when dealing with the media:

- Article 51: "Citizens of the PR of China, in exercising their freedoms and rights, may not infringe upon the interests of the state, of society or of the collective, or upon the lawful freedoms and rights of other citizens."
- Article 53: "Citizens of the PR of China must abide by the constitution and the law, keep state secrets, protect public property, observe labor discipline and public order and respect social ethics."
- Article 54: "It is the duty of citizens of the PR of China to safeguard the security, honor and interests of the motherland; they must not commit acts detrimental to the security, honor and interests of the motherland."

After the crackdown of the pro-democracy movement in June 1989, the media, and especially the press, suffered several major setbacks. The unrest that accompanied the

protest also caused serious concern about the government's stability; thus the media became a main target for control. Gradually the CCP government tightened control again, this time through modern regulatory and management mechanisms, and the media and news management were subjected to "processes of secularization, formalization, and regularization" (Lee, 2000, p. 561). The state's comprehensive control over the media has three main aspects: legal, financial, and structural–organizational.

Legal and policy control

First of all, at the legal level, the party-state has created new institutions and regulatory regimes. In early 1987 the State Administration for Press and Publications was established: it was to be in charge of drafting regulations, licensing, overall planning, and monitoring texts for the print media in China. In 2001 it was renamed the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), which also regulates Internet publications. In 1986, under state initiative, several organs merged into the Film and Television Bureau; in 1998 this body was reorganized into the current SARFT, to regulate and administer the radio, film, and television sectors. In 2000 the Internet Information Management Bureau was added to the State Council Information Office: this body was meant to coordinate and strengthen control over the content of the Internet. Besides, the central propaganda department (CPD) is responsible for ideology-related work and for implementing media censorship across all sectors. The state also promulgated a series of media rules and regulations designed to institutionalize and regularize media control. These rules and regulations cover a wide range of topics and, although they were not always enforced, they actually show the party's effort to make media control more acceptable by virtue of its predictability (Zhao, 2005).

Moreover, media law was ambiguous and the direction of the party-state was in practice more important than any legal code in determining the status of the media. The party line served as a guiding principle for the mass media and determined most issues in media work. The party line consisted of three elements: (1) the news media must accept the party's guiding ideology as their own; (2) they must propagate the party's programs, policies, and directives; and (3) they must accept the party's leadership and stick to the party's organizational principles and press policies (Zhao, 1998, p. 19). Just as Hu Yaobang, a former general secretary of the CCP, put it in a widely publicized speech: "The party's news media are the party's mouthpiece, including both party and non-party news outlets. They are all under the leadership of the party and must follow the party lines, principles and policies" (quoted in He, 1994, p. 45). The shift in press policy from the relatively relax to the restrictive truly mirrors the government's concern for state stability.

Financial aspects

Second, the party-state's financial approach to controlling the media involved the reduction of subsidies and the promotion of marketization. The media used to be completely subsidized by the state. They were assessed by how well they produced

social benefits as defined by the state, rather than by how much profit they made (Zhao, 1998). The beginning of media commercialization in China was often considered to have taken place in February 1979, when the first piece of advertisement appeared on Shanghai Television; but in practice market mechanisms in the media began in 1978, when the state started to cut media subsidies due to budgetary constraints (Zhao, 1998). However, the official public announcements of media marketization did not take place until 1992, when Liang Heng, an official in charge of newspaper management at the SPPA (State Press and Publication Administration), for the first time indicated the commodity nature of the press and proclaimed the imperative of "eventually pushing newspapers to the market" (Zhao, 1998, p. 50). The party-state realized that it was "imperative to shed part of its mammoth financial obligations, urging all media to achieve financial self-reliance and even taking measures to curtail traditional aid to them" (Chen & Lee, 1998, p. 580). Therefore the government adopted and implemented a series of policies to encourage the media to find new ways of generating more revenues. And the media practitioners' personal incomes were closely linked to their performance and profitability (Stockmann, 2013; Zhao, 2005).

For the press sector, subscriptions and advertising have thus become the vital financial sources of income. Party and political organ papers were less concerned about the problem of circulation, since they relied mostly on the government subscriptions at all levels of government office. Other non-official newspapers, however, have to make efforts to attract a larger audience and, accordingly, more advertising. Simultaneously, the increasing market demands for better media services have given rise to the rapid growth of the advertising industry. Some media outlets were able to fund themselves through advertising revenues; however, those that failed to do so were either swallowed by bigger organizations or shut down. By the end of the 1990s most media outlets had become not only financially self-sufficient, but profitable (Stockmann, 2013).

As for the broadcasting sector, advertising has become the main funding source for television as early as in 1979. On the eve of the economic reforms, broadcasting provisions were centralized at the national and provincial levels, and in the early 1980s they were decentralized to reduce the massive financial burden of the state government. In the late 1980s provincial stations began to set up market-oriented subsidiary channels so as to expand their urban advertisement market. At the same time, advertising and other commercial activities had funded about 40–70 percent of most of Chinese TV stations (Yan, 2000). The broadcasting sector seemed to develop toward decentralization and specialization. As Zhao (1998, p. 125) said: "The new types of stations counterbalance the lopsided political and propagandist orientation of the 'official model' and give fuller play to the economic, cultural and entertainment functions of broadcasting."

Structural and organizational aspects

Patterned after the old Soviet model, the structure and organization of China's media system was created to ensure the party's penetration and control. The structure of the media formed an interwoven web "with profound implications for their

financial control, social influence, and editorial content" (Chen & Lee, 1998, p. 581). The market-oriented transformation of the Chinese media was not a progress over the previous structure; rather it has been carried out within the orbit of the party-state (Zhao, 2000).

In the press sector, the SPPA implemented the licensing system that secured the party's control over the fundamental structure of newspapers. No newspaper can be established as an independent business. All prospective newspapers must be registered under a recognized institutional publisher or sponsor, which included party committees, government bureaucracies, mass organizations, and other institutions of above county-level official standing. Only party committees can represent "general interest" and publish it. Other publishers must confine their papers either to a target social group (women, youth, workers, and so forth) or to an area of specialization (business, sports, culture, health, and so forth) (Zhao, 2000, 2005). With the progress of the press transformations, a variety of mass appeal newspapers have flourished. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the "evening papers," the tabloids, and the general-content press surged with the marketization of the press. These papers were mostly published as second papers or as urban subsidiaries by major provincial and municipal party committees or party organs. The "metro papers" came into being during the mid- and late 1990s, as subsidiaries of provincial party organs. The market orientation made these papers more outspoken on social issues.

The increasing commercialization of the press brought about the prosperity of evening papers, specialized papers, and tabloids. As Zhao (1998) noted, the decline of the party papers and the rise of the mass appeal press have posed a serious challenge to the political and moral codes of party journalism. She concluded:

> In short, the tabloids, especially some of the weekend editions, have violated many aspects of party journalism in their pursuit of market success. Principles of party journalism such as positive propaganda, "correct" guidance of public opinion, as well as conventional party definitions of news, have been disregarded or subverted. (Zhao, 1998, p. 139)

James FlorCruz (1999), the correspondent of *Time*, commented:

> As the media market continues to grow, the news media have become increasingly open and responsive to public demand. To the people in China, the press and broadcasters are now a real source of information and food for thought, rather than a skimpy compendium of sterile polemic and abstruse dogma. The vibrancy, diversity and enterprise of newspapers, magazines and television shows reflect growing pluralism and Beijing's inability to control it. (FlorCruz, 1999)

A similar situation also occurred in the broadcasting sector. The proliferation of highly profit-oriented broadcasting stations led to a big waste of resources and intense competition between media outlets affiliated to various levels of the party-state bureaucracy, which consequently undermined the propaganda objectives

of the central state. Driven by the profit motive, many broadcasting stations, especially those at the municipal and county levels, rushed to broadcast imported shows beyond the state-set quotas, or they even pirated foreign, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese entertainment shows (Zhao, 2005).

Conglomeration as a means of control

In response, the state government started a process of conglomeration by way of giving an impetus to resolving the fragmentation of the domestic market and to tightening organizational control over media outlets. At the time, media merger and conglomeration appeared as an optimal form of integration of political control and market efficiency in the media industries (Zhao, 2005). Officially, the direct reason for conglomeration was the desire to consolidate social resources and to strengthen the mainstream and central media through mergers with less competitive media (Hu, 2003). Media conglomeration also aimed to enhance the competitiveness of domestic media, so as to make them able to compete with their global counterparts after China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Guangzhou Daily was the first to develop as a newspaper conglomerate, which happened in 1996. It expanded its number of subsidiary publications and increased overall profitability and financial strength. In two years' time, the Guangzhou Daily Group had become one of Guangzhou's top 10 state enterprises and a major economic powerhouse, with revenue at 1.72 billion Yuan ($207 million) and profit at 349 million Yuan ($42 million) (Zhao, 2000, p. 16). After carefully studying and analyzing the Guangzhou Daily Group experience, the party decided to promote the press conglomeration, the principal purpose being to "enable party organs to consolidate a powerful economic base through the market mechanism and ensure the better fulfillment of the party's propaganda objectives" (Tan, 1997, p. 254; quoted in Zhao, 2005, p. 193; and also quoted in Zhao, 2008, p. 98). Furthermore, in 1999 newspapers were forced to either achieve complete financial autonomy or merge with central and provincial party organs, as a part of the strategy to consolidate the media capital under major party organs. They had to shut down if their circulation was below 30,000 and if party organs were unwilling to take them over (Zhao, 2005, p. 194). Many commercialized papers were dismantled or merged into press groups. For example, the lucrative mass-oriented *Xinmin Evening News* was forced to merge with the party-controlled and less profitable *Wenhui Bao*, to form the Wenhui-Xinmin Group in 1998 (Zhao, 2005, p. 194). By 2002 China boasted 39 newspaper conglomerates, and 34 of them were headed by a party paper (Stockmann, 2013).

The broadcasting sector also adopted corporatization and conglomeration in the late 1990s. In September 1999 the SARFT and the Ministry of Information Industry co-promulgated the "Notice about Further Administration of Broadcasting Cable Networks" (known as Document No. 82 in Chinese media policy circles), replacing the "four-level" media system by a "two-level" one in order to reduce the number of broadcasting outlets (Hu, 2003). Some broadcasting stations at the

regional and county levels were requested to shut down; besides, all these stations were asked to transmit programs made by broadcasting stations at the central and provincial levels rather than producing their own programs. The first pilot broadcast conglomerate was set up in 1999; it was a subsidiary of the Wuxi Broadcasting Bureau. One year later, the first provincial-level broadcast conglomerate was officially established in Hunan Province (Zhao, 2005). Moreover, radio and television were merged to form a media group. One week before China officially entered into the WTO, the state's mega media conglomerate, the China Radio, Film, & Television Group, was established by combing the resources of China Central Television, China National Radio, China Radio International, and China Film Group Corporation. The year 2001 witnessed a succession of state-mandated conglomerations in the history of Chinese broadcasting.[3] The merger of television stations integrated resources and avoided wasteful duplications of program content. Besides, television channels became more specialized and produced programs oriented toward different kinds of audience, which were accordingly favorable to the expansion of the market.

Discussions on Commercialization and Democratization

More than 30 years ago, China witnessed an unprecedented transformation in its media system; that was part and parcel of the state's economic reform. The embrace of a free market economy gave rise to a proliferation of media outlets and to the diversification of information formats in the media system. Commercialization has gradually transformed the role of the media: instead of being tools of the party, they have taken a more market-oriented direction. This has generated debates among scholars regarding the implications of media reform for the state's authoritarian regime. Scholars agreed about the importance of liberating the market in an authoritarian party-state, but they diverged on the role of commercialization in liberalizing political control over the media. While some celebrated the emancipatory potential of the state market in China (Lee, 2000), others argued that the party has continued its control over the domestic media both ideologically and institutionally (Zhao, 1998). These contradictory academic literatures on the nature of media transformations could be generally categorized into two groups: media reform weakened political control, and media reform increased or did not change the degree of political control (Stockmann, 2013).

Many scholars in the first group have adopted a "party versus market" framework to analyze the relationship between the market and the state and often regarded it as inherently antagonistic, claiming that the two inevitably "undermine each other" (Chen & Gong, 1997, p. 162; Hao, Huang, & Zhang, 1998, p.36). Media commercialization in China has put structural pressure on the CCP to lower its ideological demands and allow more autonomy over media operation, and Chan (1993, p. 17) believed that "such erosion of the CCP's control over ideology will in intensify." Similarly, Hao, Huang, and Zhang (1998, p. 37) argued that "the

development of a market economy invariably weakens the political control of the Communist Party or vice versa" and, as a result, "a non-state controlled public sphere is emerging."

Rather than treating marketization and political control as two opposing forces, scholars from this group questioned the limits of such an approach (Pan, 1997; Zhao, 1998) and argued that the party would continue its control over the mass media (Zhao, 1998; Weber, 2002; Latham, 2000; Stockmann & Gallagher, 2011). Zhao (2000) claimed that the party-state has actively incorporated market forces and initiated media conglomeration for the purpose of facilitating media capitalization and in order to get ready for global competition on the one hand and to enhance political control on the other. Some scholars also argued that market mechanisms have even improved the effectiveness of media's role as the mouthpiece and "eyes and ears" of the party (Gordon, 1997) instead of undermining its control. And media competition in the marketplace has also enriched and enhanced the party propaganda, as Barmé (1999) claimed.

It is worth noting that the opinions discussed above date mainly from the early 2000s. During the last decade, these views have evolved. Indeed the answer to the question of whether China's media reforms "carry a compass pointing toward a democratic future" is uncertain and complex (Zhao, 2010, pp. 577–578). When we study the relationship between the ongoing media transformations and the state, it is important to consider not only the influence exerted by the Soviet Leninist model, but also, as Zhao (2008) argued, the fact that Chinese leaders learned a lesson from the "failure" of Soviet political control over the media and ideology in general.

One most crucial issue is that of media ownership. In August 2002 the CPD, the SARFT, and the SPPA issued jointly a secret document (Document No. 17), in which the CCP claimed proprietary rights over all domestic media conglomerates (Hu, 2003). According to Document No. 17, China's media conglomerates are owned by the CPD at different levels. With this claim, the party "effectively separated media ownership rights from media management responsibilities" (Zhao, 2005).

New Media Technologies versus Authoritarian Control

On their arrival in the 1990s, the developed information and communication technologies (ICTs) took people into the age of global computer communications, providing them with accesses to the Internet. This opened a window to information from around the world. When more than 25 million people around the world were connected to the Internet, China was poised to move into the fast lane of the information superhighway. In the mid-1990s the Internet service began to be offered in Beijing and Shanghai; soon it spread throughout the country. Many mainstream newspapers also went online in the late 1990s: the *People's Daily*, the *Guangzhou Daily*, the *South Daily*, the *Xinmin Evening News*, and the *Yangchen Evening News* (Yan, 2000). The Internet has expanded rapidly in China in the last

decade and is becoming a major medium of communication, where people can find not only major papers and journals, television and radio stations, central and local government organs, universities and related communities – but also a large variety of organizations.

The proliferation of Internet service providers seemed to develop in a decentralized manner, which concerned the government. By linking China-based users to foreign information and ideas, the Internet opened a window to information from around the world. In this way it posed a challenge to the state's control over the spread of foreign ideas among the Chinese population. Like governments in many other countries, the Chinese government tried to maintain control by three methods: (1) by limiting the network's services; (2) by limiting the number of users; and (3) by monitoring the traffic (Wei, 1996). In January 1996 the State Council issued "Interim Regulations on International Interconnection of Computer Information Networks in the PRC" (Order No. 195) so as to build a regulatory structure to consolidate the administration of China's information infrastructure. The regulations divided China's Internet network into two categories: interconnecting networks and access networks. Under the interim guidelines, only four organizations were authorized to serve as managers of international Internet access in China: the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), the Ministry of the Electronics Industry (MEI), the State Education Commission (SEC), and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). All interconnecting networks had to be controlled and administered by one of these entities (see Tan, Mueller, & Foster, 1997). Consequently, ChinaNET, CERNET, GBNet, and CASNet were set up – each one by one of the four entities.[4]

In addition, in February 1996, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) issued regulations requiring Internet users to register with public security authorities, which meant that the users' online activities might be monitored by police. Such regulations manifested the government's determination to consolidate the administration of all computer network-building activities and international interconnections under the four government agencies (Tan et al., 1997). Moreover, in December 1997, the MPS promulgated the "Regulations on the Security and Management of Computer Information Networks and the Internet," with an attempt to ban certain sites on the World Wide Web.[5] In 2003 a censor and surveillance project – the Golden Shield (often called the Great Firewall) began to operate (Norris, 2010).

Generally speaking, policy and regulations for the Internet at the time followed precedents set by the state's treatment of the mainstream media, which could be described as "an attempt to balance gradual commercialization and modernization with controls protecting the Communist Party's ideological and political dominance" (Tan et al., 1997, p. 11). Indeed the central government allowed the development of technology in order to promote economic development in the country, but simultaneously it attempted to prevent the new media from mounting threats to the regime. To strengthen its political legitimacy and to maintain appropriate levels of social cohesion, the communist government has engaged with new media technologies designed to guide its development and modernization within frameworks

of subtler control modalities (see, e.g., Weber & Lu, 2004; Weber & Lu, 2006). The state's overt mechanisms of control over the Internet – censorships, firewalls, and increased monitoring – are widely known and documented.

Discussions of New Media Technologies

The state's control over the flow of information and the implication of the ICTs have become highly discussed topics among academic scholars and media practitioners across the world. Discussions of the relationship between the new technology and democracy, like those of mainstream media, often produced binary opposition: while some held that the Internet allows people to express their views more freely than before and thus will lead to democratization (e.g., Dittmer & Liu, 2006; Wu, 2007; Zheng, 2008), others argued that the Internet would contribute to maintaining and strengthening government control. Taking different perspectives, scholars and researchers conducted a number of studies to investigate the relationship between the global information highway and the state's efforts to retain its political and ideological control.

Starting from the premise that there is "built-in incompatibility between nondemocratic rule and the Internet," Taubman (1998, p. 256) argued that the liberalizing potentials and the economic benefits of the Internet had put the Chinese government in a dilemma of policy decision making. Qiu (1999) questioned Taubman's assumption and pointed out that the author does not consider the defensive measures of the party-state. In his work, Qiu studied the party's institutional responses to the challenge of the Internet and found that the state's control over the Internet in China is legislative, technological, and administrative. He further pointed out that the use of Internet does not paralyze the authorities in their efforts to minimize the liberalizing impact of the new medium. In 1996, taking a bottom-up approach and using web observation and interpretive content analysis of messages in bulletin board systems (BBSs), Edgar Huang conducted an empirical research that was published three years later (Huang, 1999). The author found that China-based BBSs were under various discussion rules and politically oriented censorship. Accordingly, Chinese Internet users rarely engaged in "hard topic discussions" in domestic BBSs, but, once they were able to visit the overseas BBSs, they tended to talk more about democratic developments. From his research results, Huang argued that the Internet does not play an irresistible role as a democratizing force but creates a platform for the Chinese netizens to start learning what democracy means to them through their daily exchanges of ideas and information.

Over the years, the Internet has already been disseminated among Chinese populations, and the rapid development of ICTs has taken us into a Web 2.0 era. People not only obtain information on the Internet, they can also express their own opinions and disseminate information in various formats. Griffiths (2008) argued that Web 2.0 is not merely a technological revolution, but also a sociocultural one. With people's increasing demands for information and knowledge, businesses

organizations and governmental organs have had to adopt interactive approaches (e.g. Wang, 2002; Hartford, 2005; Zhai & Liu, 2007). Meanwhile, the increased interactivity of Internet users reflects underlying assumptions that could ultimately influence even their political attitudes (Herold, 2009).

Arsène (2008) argued that the continuity of online interactions helps develop certain minimum standards of flexibly and politeness among Internet users. In the author's opinion, Internet users have to accept conflicting views, arguments, and even abuse, so as to keep interacting in their community. Meanwhile they also show politeness in order to ensure that other users will read their postings. The author held that such continuity of interactions represented a constant renegotiation of values, which can be regarded as a rudimentary form of public intercourse that in time could grow into the beginnings of a public sphere, and ultimately into a democratic system.

Dan, Doulet, and Keane (2009) demonstrated that the Internet has had an impact on how Chinese urbanites construct their social networks. They found through their research that there are changes in people's sociability patterns: from being focused on kin, neighborhood, classmates, and the like, the collectivist organization of society is moving to online communities that Internet users select individually and connect to. According to the authors, these communities are no longer based on inherited societal structures and family ties but on individual choices, which are more flexible. This feature of flexibility has begun to create new forms of society and community, and consequently it brings about changes to the cultural characteristics and to the political landscape.

With the help of the Internet, people were able to organize mass events. One example is the boycott of the Carrefour[6] incident in 2008. This is a typical event that diplayed the latent power of the Internet. During the incident, people transmitted information, called for a boycott through online forums, and organized the details of the activities via instant messaging systems (Cheng, 2009). The online invitation to boycott Carrefour was put into practice soon after Jiang Yu, a spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, made a speech at a regular press conference that was taken as an affirmative response.[7] The large-scale protests then took place in many major cities – Beijing, Wuhan, Xi'an, Hefei, Jinan, and others – and resulted in the temporal closure of several Carrefour stores. Under pressure, the French government then developed remedial strategies to address the Chinese sentiment. Afterwards the Chinese government took an appeasing attitude and called upon Chinese citizens to calm down; it did this by blocking sensitive keywords on web search engines and by deleting posts calling for the Carrefour (Cheng, 2009).

This case illustrates the latent power of the Internet to promote mass mobilization. Yet it also shows that the party-state allows emotional expression to a certain extent and, when need be, it will impose restrictions effectively on the Internet. As in the anti-Japanese protests in 2005,[8] the Internet can function as a catalyst for citizens' disagreement and accordingly facilitate protest. At times, such dynamics may help the state "achieve policy goals in times of crisis" (Stockmann, 2010, p. 287).

Last but not least, there are other approaches to the study of the new media technologies and of state control. For example, Weber and Lu (2007) took a

cultural approach to show how Chinese government utilized cultural values as an embedded mechanism to implement self-regulation. Yang (2003) argued that it is exactly these Chinese cultural practices that are increasingly serving as points of cultural identification and empowerment for Chinese living abroad and seeking a connection to their cultural roots (see also Herold, 2009).

Conclusion

The discussion above has showed that the media and the state are not simply two opposing forces in an authoritarian country like China. The communist government not only guided the modernization, diversification, and commercialization of the media, but also attempted to maintain control over those information flows. Studies of the relationship between the media and the state, however, are published mostly outside of Mainland China, especially those that deal with sensitive topics related to political control mechanisms. Besides, there is likely a bias in most studies, in that most authors choose big cities like Beijing, Shanghai, or Shenzhen for conducting fieldwork research. Little attention has been paid to the rural areas. Given the huge geographic and economic differences between urban and rural areas in China, more studies on less economically developed cities would provide a comprehensive understanding of the media control in China. Moreover, with the rapid development of communication technologies, people are able to access the Internet and other instant messaging tools through their mobile phones, on the go, sharing information any time, anywhere – in blogs, social networking societies, and nowadays microblogs. It will be important to examine the potential power of such tools for instant communication in future studies.

Notes

1 He (2008, p. 12) noted here that, during the period 1978–1989, political control was relatively lax and the ministry of state security had not yet openly taken on the task of ideological control. Chinese people were full of enthusiasm for the economic reforms and had not lost their interest in politics. Besides, corruption in politics had only just begun. Looking back today, He Qinglian said that journalists all agree that the period before the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 was a rare, golden time for the media under the Communist Party's rule.

2 An English version of the 1982 constitution is available online, http://english.people.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html (accessed on March 30, 2012).

3 In the same year 2001, three previously separate provincial-level television stations in Zhejiang Province – the Zhejiang Television, the Zhejiang Cable Television, and the Zhejiang Educational Television – were congregated into a provincial network in January. In April, Shanghai Culture and Broadcasting Group were officially launched. See Zhao, 2005.

4 These four networks were built by four organizations. The MPT set up ChinaNET as the backbone of the nation's Internet. Following that, Jitong Corporation, a subsidiary

under the Ministry of Electronic Industry (MEI), built its own national service platforms – the Golden Bridge Network (GBN). Both ChinaNET and the GBN served the commercial side of the market. Besides, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the State Education Commission set up the Chinese Academy of Science Network (CASNET) and the China education network (CERNET) respectively; these were designed to serve China's academic community. By the end of 1997 ChinaNET covered all the provinces in the country. CERNET is the first nationwide computer network for education and research, providing access to about 270 universities. CASNet offered Internet services to several hundred research, scientific, and technical institutions. See Goodman et al., 1998; see also Triolo & Lovelock, 1996.

5 According to private Chinese sources and Western newspapers, in 1996 China blocked as many as 100 websites "suspected of carrying spiritual pollution." According to Western industry sources, China used a filtering system to ban access to sites in the following five categories: (1) English-language sites sponsored by US news media such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and CNN; (2) Chinese-language sites featuring news and commentaries from Taiwan, which Beijing considers a renegade province of China; (3) sites sponsored by Hong Kong newspapers and anti-Beijing China-watching publications; (4) overseas dissident sites, including those providing data on the restive Himalayan region of Tibet and on Xinjiang's independence movement; (5) sexually explicit sites, such as those sponsored by Playboy and Penthouse. Some such sites remain unblocked (Chen, 1996).

6 For Chinese people, 2008 was a year of emotional turmoil: the joyful expectation of the Beijing Olympic Games was unpleasantly disturbed by one disaster after another – the severe snow storms across southern China, the Tibetan riots, the violent incidents during the 2008 Olympic Torch Relay, and the Sichuan earthquake. During that time, the French retail giant Carrefour SA, and especially its major stakeholder, Moët Hennessy–Louis Vuitton, were accused of supporting the Dalai Lama and pro-Tibetan independence groups. Some Chinese netizens then used the Internet to call for a boycott of Carrefour. See Cheng, 2009.

7 During a regular press conference, Jiang Yu referred to the Carrefour boycott, saying that the French government should reflect on the cause of such an appeal. This message was regarded as a positive official response and as an unofficial permission for further action; for more details, see the news report "Chinese Netizens Urge Carrefour Boycott after Torch Relay Incident," 2008).

8 The 2005 anti-Japanese spring demonstrations were a series of protests that broke out in many major cities in the spring of 2005. Those protests were sparked off by a number of issues, including Japanese state approval of a Japanese history textbook accused of whitewashing Japanese war crimes committed during the First Sino-Japanese War (see Patrick, 2007, p. 650; BBC News, 2005).

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38

The Construction of National Image in the Media and the Management of Intercultural Conflicts

Xiaodong Dai and Guo-Ming Chen

Introduction

National image reflects a nation's character and its basic cultural orientation. Positive images help nation-states gain international recognition and reputation; they also promote national pride and cohesion. China, France, Japan and many other nation-states have made a great effort to construct a positive national image in the international community. The construction of national image is an open-ended negotiating process. Nation-states negotiate to define, redefine, and establish their desirable images, and the mass media play an important role in shaping them. As they constitute a free platform for global communication, the mass media provide governments and people with powerful instruments for creating favorable images.

Decades ago, scholars from anthropology and social psychology conducted pioneering research in the area of national character (e.g., Benedict, 1946; Farber 1950; Mead, 1961). Their studies paved the way for an inquiry into national image since the early 1980s (e.g., Claret, 2001; Liu & He, 2006; Manheim & Albritton, 1984; Rivenburgh, 1992; Zhou, 2007). Scholars interpreted national image from the perspective of international relations, mass communication, world history, literary critique, and other disciplines. While most of the studies addressed issues such as the concept of national image, how media shape the image negotiation process, and what the effective strategies of constructing positive images are, few of them discussed how cultural differences affect national image construction in the mass media.

According to Sun (2010), national image is in essence a cultural construct, and differences in cultural values, beliefs, and norms as well as in ways of media representation tend to result in intercultural disagreements or conflicts that occur in the

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process of identity negotiation or image construction. Intercultural disagreements or conflicts are especially salient between the individualistic West and the collectivistic East. The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on how cultural differences produce barriers to national image negotiation and to use the People's Republic of China as an example that will illustrate the cultural conflict, or even dilemma, inherent in the negotiating process. The chapter consists of two parts. The first part defines the concept of national image and explains the relationship between the mass media and national image construction, and the second part identifies what causes intercultural conflicts in mass media negotiation and proposes strategies for managing this tension.

National Image and the Media

The nature of national image

The concept of "national image" is rich in meaning and can be defined from various perspectives. It is closely associated with a number of similar concepts expressed in phrases such as "national reputation," "national temperament," "national personality," "national face," and "national identity." For example, scholars of international relations tend to take national image as part of a nation's soft power and cultural capital. As Ding (2011) argues, national image as an important power source and essential part of strategic capital embodies a judgment of a state's character and past behavior that helps others predict its future behavior. This perspective points to the fact that the construction of national image affects international relations and is subject to the manipulation of political power.

Mass media researchers tend to interpret the concept of national image as the symbolic presentation of a nation in international communications. For instance, Liu and He (2006) posit that national image refers to people's general perception of a nation via various kinds of media, which are both subjective and objective. Moreover, Rivenburgh (1992, p. 3) defines national image as "a symbolic construction containing abstract and concrete representations associated with a given nation or its peoples." This perspective explains how media representation shapes national image.

Scholars of business management tend to conceptualize national image as a national brand in the process of commercial negotiation and international trade. For instance, Zou and Yu (2007) assert that national image is the impression and reputation of a country's products in the mind of businessmen and consumers. This perspective emphasizes national creditability and consumers' confidence in conducting international business.

Finally, most scholars in different disciplines agree that, as indicated by Luther (2002), national image should be perceived as a manifestation of national identity. Following this tradition, the present chapter treats national image as a generalized definition of a nation's identity, something that embodies the core values and behavioral patterns of the nation in the process of global communication. In other words,

the construction of national image is an open-ended negotiating process that consists of a nation's self-definition and the definition of international society.

The development of national identity starts from self-definition. Smith (1991, 2001) points out that national identity refers to the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the patterns of values, symbols, myths, and traditions that make up the distinctive heritage of a nation. It is continually reconstituted through the selection of symbolic elements from that ethno-heritage and through reidentification with these cultural values or norms when they change. Nevertheless, because national image highlights a nation's appearance in international society, the definition of other nations also plays a crucial part in its establishment. A potential gap between self-definition and definition of "other" therefore arises, and each of the definitions contains a part of the truth (Claret, 2001).

In addition, national image denotes a collective personality and a set of shared traits of a given country. Although individuals or subgroups may show variations, they always demonstrate some observable commonalities. Hence, to simplify, national image forms a matrix that governs the national group's attitudes, cultural values, and patterns of behavior by molding the individual personality of its members (Singer, 1968). Individuals may exercise freedom to various degrees, but the way they think and act is also influenced by their national framework. Finally, national image is established through a continuous process of negotiation that takes place within and beyond its boundary. Once national image is established, it will gradually gain durability and create stereotypes. This often makes it difficult for national image to be reconstructed or transformed in the ongoing negotiation between nations (Wang, 2009).

Mass media and national image negotiation

There are many channels for learning about a country, but the mass media are no doubt the most powerful ones. Few people seek first-hand information by themselves; "most of what they know comes to them 'second' or 'third' hand from the mass media" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 176). The mass media play an important part in shaping both the process of national image construction and its result. In order to negotiate the desired image, nation-states highlight their favorable characteristics and dilute or conceal the less favorable ones by deliberately using the agenda-setting function of the mass media to their advantage or by framing the news in a certain way.

A medium, according to agenda-setting theory, "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling people what to think about" (Cohen, 1963, p. 13). Through the careful selection and display of news or information, editors and news directors focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what the important issues of the day are. This ability to shape the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be referred to as the agenda-setting role of the mass media (McCombs, 2004). Through the presentation of issues (that is, through agenda setting), the media commonly disseminate

elite opinions to the public. Thus they play an important role in shaping public attitudes (Fan, 1988; Zaller, 1992).

As a political and strategic process of selecting key issues for active consideration, agenda setting can be approached from different perspectives (Cobb, Ross, & Ross, 1976; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). For example, it can focus on new issues, considered by proponents who have little attention for the previous agenda; or it can allow the opponents to prevent certain issues from receiving close attention through the employment of various symbolic and cultural means. Studies based on the agenda-setting approach have included the formation of domestic and foreign policy (McCombs, 2004), various influences on leadership and international relations (Pan, 2008), the analysis of presidential elections (Weaver, 1977), concerns about nuclear safety (Birkland, 1997), the impact of smoking (Sato, 2003), and other international business events such as Google's withdrawal from China (Kuang, 2011). Moreover, Weaver (2007) indicates that agenda setting can be distributed at two levels, one emphasizing the perceived significance or the relative salience of selective issues and the other focusing more on the perceived importance of the attributes of selective issues. In general, the literature on agenda setting shows that the more emphasis the mass media place on strategically selective issues, the more importance audiences attribute to these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), and government tends to play a leading role in the process of shaping news media coverage via agenda setting (Spitzer, 1993).

From a communication perspective, "frames" refer to a set of centrally organized ideas that provide meanings "to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). They are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion" of news by which news producers organize verbal or visual discourse in the process of news production (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). News framing reflects the ideological foundation of news coverage, which leads journalists to give a specific meaning to the news story they choose to report. Framing can be a powerful tool in the attempt to increase the degree of acceptability of social issues by imbuing them with specific meanings without the notice of the audience, or "by eliminating voices or weakening arguments of those attempting to generate news coverage for their candidate, cause, or policy" (Tankard, 2001, p. 97). Thus, framing as a communication source that presents and defines issues can serve as a strategy for agenda setting by eliciting subsequent effects on audience cognition and public opinion through its emphasis on how the issues are reported and discussed from the perspective of agenda setting (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 1998).

When explaining how media agenda setting helps nations establish desired images, three aspects are of crucial importance: visibility, valence, and breadth (Manheim & Albritton, 1984; Rivenburgh, 1992). Visibility refers to the amount of media coverage a nation receives and to the location or placement of that coverage in media; valence refers to how favorably or unfavorably the media content reflects national identity; and breadth refers to the character and cognitive complexity of media representation associated with the national image.

The media may fail to change people's minds because the audience may pay only casual and intermittent attention to public affairs and remain ignorant of the details. In order to increase the power of the media through agenda setting, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2010) four factors are indispensable: media credibility, the extent of conflicting evidence as perceived by the public, the extent to which individuals share media value orientation, and the public need for guidance.

In global communication, national image is not a universally recognized identity owned by a nation. Because the same value or behavior is often interpreted differently, nations may have competing images (Mercer, 1996), thus a negotiation process is usually demanded for a nation to achieve a positive identity. In the process of identity negotiation, a nation's history, relative strength, and value orientation are the key factors that affect the construction of the national image. A nation with a positive reputation or a glorious past tends to easily gain a favorable image, while a nation with a negative reputation would find it difficult to remove its unfavorable image. National image develops over a long period of time, and once established it forms stereotypes that resist change. In international communication the tendency to develop stereotypes is particularly strong, because it is common for people to be limited in the amount of incoming information they can process and therefore to develop stereotypes as a way to reduce the cognitive burden of dealing with a too complex world. As Rivenburgh (1992) argues, people tend to view other nations rather narrowly, on the basis of cultural affinity, political alignment, and economic development. In other words, in the absence of some comprehensive knowledge, people tend to fill in the image gap with emotional or value-laden aspects drawn from stereotypes.

The power structure of international society also affects the negotiation of national image. Some nations are more in charge than others, some are better able to initiate flows and movement, while others tend to be imprisoned by them (Massey, 1994). This asymmetrical power structure in identity negotiation is typically reflected in the domination of the West over the non-West. Western countries have not only the technological edge over non-Western nations, but also more access to digital resources, which leads to imbalance in media communication. Non-Western events, values, and images are therefore represented less and in a more negative way (Kraidy, 2002). The limited non-Western images portrayed in Western media are usually partial, fragmented, culturally decontextualized, catering to the taste of Western audiences (Rivenburgh, 1992; Sun, 2009).

Finally, people tend to project their own values onto the behaviors of another culture. In the context of Western domination, national images are interpreted in the Western cultural frame of reference and become representative of the Westerners' accepted sense of identity (Said, 1994). Non-Western nations that embrace their traditional values are often negatively represented in the media, which often leads to a great challenge for them to legitimize their identities. In most cases, unfortunately, non-Western countries struggle for recognition mainly by adapting to the West. They are either overaccommodating or threatened to be assimilated, and this potentially causes serious problems in the process of identity

negotiation. More frustrating still is a situation in which non-Western cultural traits are tolerated and used to show Western efforts at preserving cultural diversity. The non-Westerners' dilemma in self-definition and cultural transformation, along with Westerners' insensitivity, makes intercultural identity negotiation problematic. In order to combat the domination and cultural hegemony of Western media, non-Westerners tend to adopt the strategy of cultural resistance (Chen & Dai, 2012). Therefore state censorship, website supervision, ideological and moral attacks become instruments used frequently by non-Westerners, in an attempt to maintain their own cultural particularities.

The following section uses the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as an example to illustrate how the Chinese government builds its national image.

Chinese National Image Construction in the Olympic Games

China continues to be negatively represented in the Western media (Ono & Jiao, 2008). As Kobland, Du, and Joongrok Kwon, (1992) indicate, Western journalists have framed the news from the perspective of anti-communism when covering China, since the People's Republic was founded in 1949. Reliance on this anti-communism frame inevitably results in a one-dimensional coverage of China, which often neglects complex cultural and social issues (Jacobs, 2008). Facing this unfair treatment, the Chinese government, with its rapid economic development from the early 1990s, began to make a huge effort to improve national image by portraying a peaceful and harmonious country. The Chinese government's endeavors culminated in the hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

China had long been portrayed by the Western media as an authoritarian, static, irrational, backward, and somewhat mysterious nation (Zhou, 2007). Although the Chinese image has gradually improved, issues such as human rights abuse, political corruption, social instability, and environmental pollution continue to appear in the leading Western media. As Li and Zhao (2002) argued, the problem is caused by national interests that prompt different ways of seeing the same issue when journalists report events. In other words the definition, judgment, and interpretation of an issue from a journalist's perspective are all framed by the views of that journalist's government. In addition, national interests are very much embedded in the nation's cultural values. For instance, the coverage of the Western media is based on the ideals of freedom of speech and expression and on the belief in democracy as the correct path for national development. Against this backdrop, the Chinese government mobilizes its state-owned media and makes use of the Western media to construct a positive image. Hosting the 2008 Olympic Games offered China a golden opportunity to portray a peaceful and harmonious nation that is going global. In order to create a favorable image in the international community, the Chinese government set up three agendas for the national image construction: green Olympics, humanistic Olympics, and scientific Olympics.

During the preparation process, Beijing was redecorated, hundreds of polluting factories were shut down, and plenty of trees, flowers, and grass were planted so that the quality of the air and city environment could be improved. At the same time, various cultural activities were sponsored to display the Chinese way of life and its rich and attractive cultural traditions. Beijing citizens were encouraged to learn English and to line up when waiting for the bus or buying tickets. High-technology Olympic stadiums and gyms were built from environmental protection materials. City infrastructure was reconstructed, and advanced telecommunication systems were developed to exhibit a modernized China. All of the projects were directly funded or supported by the Chinese government. At the end of 2006, in order to attract more foreign media, the state lifted a decades-old restriction on foreign journalists. Foreign media were allowed greater freedom when they conducted interviews or gathered information.

In terms of visibility, the Beijing Olympic Games attracted over 21,600 registered journalists and 5,000 non-registered journalists from all over the world. From August 8 to August 24, more than 4 billion people watched the games. In addition to the 10 thousand athletes, 100 state heads and members of royal families and 500,000 tourists visited Beijing (Hu, 2011). All of the world's mainstream media – USA's *American Press* and *New York Times*, the British *Reuters* and *The Times*, the Canadian *Globe* and *Mail*, the German *Presse Agentur*, the French *Agence France Presse*, the Japanese *Kyodo News* and *Asahi Shimbun*, the Chinese *Xinhua News Agency* and *China Daily* – reported the games in headline news or leading articles. China had never exposed itself to the world in such a grandiose way; the 2008 Beijing Olympics proved to be a truly global media event.

In terms of valence, the Beijing Olympic Games effectively enhanced the positive image of China. Before the Olympic Games, most of the Chinese issues reported in the Western media were negative. News about Tibet riots, resistance to the Olympic torch relay, Beijing's bad air and sand storm showed an unfavorable Chinese image. During the games, the Western media were impressed by the improved air, modernized facilities, and highly efficient organization of the host nation. Although a few journalists criticized the domineering role of the Chinese government in hosting the games, most of the news and reports had a positive attitude toward the huge success of the Beijing Olympics Games and presented the image of a rising great power (Ding, 2011; Gan & Peng, 2008).

In terms of breadth, the Beijing Olympics Games also helped to enrich media content. The Western media not only showed the spectacular stadiums and gyms, the exciting games and athletic communications, but also introduced to the public the citizens' engagement, Chinese national art and folklore, as well as the country's economic and scientific development. These reports were less prejudiced than in the past and achieved a truer and more comprehensive representation of the Chinese reality (Shi, 2009).

However, the Beijing Olympic agenda-setting maneuver also had its setbacks. It added some positive elements to the national image but did not produce a qualitative change in the Western view of China. After the games, news about poisoned

milk powder and mine explosions, together with issues about China being a threat, its human rights abuse, nationalistic emotion, environmental pollution, and political corruption returned as major themes in the Western media. According to a 25-nation survey in 2009, while the proportion of those who believed that China would have a positive impact on the world came down from 45 percent in 2008 to 39 percent, the proportion of those who believed that China would have a negative impact on the world rose from 33 percent in 2008 to 40 percent (Sun, 2010).

The relapse into negative stereotypes after a positive attitude during the Beijing Olympics Games is not surprising. According to Murray (2011), the negative report of the Western media (for instance the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*) on two Chinese women's arrest before the Beijing Olympic Games represents the real face of Western media. The two women – 79-year-old Wu Dianyuan and 77-year-old Wang Xiuying – had been arrested allegedly for posing a threat to public order, but in reality for protesting against the government for not fulfilling the agreement that they would be given a new apartment after their homes were destroyed for a new development. Murray (2011) further indicated that the repeated reports on the two women's arrest rely "on the frame of Western exceptionalism by outlining the West's rightful role" and "the Western ideals of freedom of expression and speech are characterized as required components of China's westernization" (p. 19).

Intercultural conflict in national image negotiation

As stated above, the mass media provide governments and people from different cultures with a powerful instrument to construct their national images. The construction of national image as a culturally based negotiating process concerns both the nation's self-definition and the evaluation of the international community; but, due to the differences in cultural values, norms, and ways of representation, intercultural conflicts often arise in the process of national image negotiation. The most salient conflict of this kind is the one between the individualism-oriented media representation and the collectivism-oriented media representation.

The negotiation of media content generally falls within the bounds of dominant cultural values as prescribed by the media format; in other words the underlying order, perspectives, and practical limitations of the media in any given society are based on cultural orientations (Altheide, 1985). The way of media representation is also shaped by cultural orientations. According to Hofstede (2001) and Triandis (1995), individualism and collectivism are two social constructs that embody different cultural preferences. Individualism is a social pattern consisting of loosely connected individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives. Individualism-oriented cultural members are primarily motivated by their own needs or rights and give priority to their personal goals. Collectivism, in contrast, is a social pattern consisting of closely connected individuals who see themselves as parts of a collective. Collectivism-oriented cultural members are primarily motivated by the duties or norms of the group and are willing to give priority to the goals of the group over their own personal goals. Individualism is embraced by

the West, typically represented by the United States and Australia, and collectivism is embraced by the East, typically represented by China and Japan. When individualistic cultures interact with collectivistic ones, different underlying assumptions are likely to produce cultural clashes.

In the process of image negotiation, cultural conflicts often arise under three forms. First, individualism-oriented nations value individual freedom, social equality, honesty, and individual rights, while collectivism-oriented nations value group harmony, face saving, group interest, intergroup relations, and social order (Triandis, 1995). The dissimilarities between the two cultural groups may lead to different foci in the presentation of national image. Second, while individualistic nations tend to use a low-context, explicit, and direct way of expression and to separate issues from a conflict relationship, the collectivistic nations tend to use a highly contextualized, indirect way of expression and see the issues and the relationship as an interrelated whole. The differences are reflected in negotiation style: individualistic nations employ a more analytic and linear logic and collectivistic nations are more holistic and emotional (McLaren, 1998). This in turn will lead to different ways of representation in the negotiation of national image. For instance, individualistic nations are inclined to attach importance to present achievements and often employ direct and expressive words to give a self-definition or to evaluate other nations, while collectivistic nations put more emphasis on historical achievements and usually keep a low profile in the international community by showing more discretion in self-definition and in evaluating others. In addition, individualistic nations encourage freedom of speech and legitimize the expression of diverse voices in the media; collectivistic nations strive to reach consensus and to speak in one voice.

Third and finally, individualistic nations focus more on personal face, collectivistic nations on group face. Ting-Toomey (2005b) finds that, when one's image is threatened in a conflict situation, individualists tend to be more concerned with protecting their own image, whereas collectivists are more concerned with accommodating the face of others or with mutual face saving. Ting-Toomey further indicates that there are striking differences in face-saving strategies between the two cultural types. Individualists are found to favor upfront, aggressive engagement and direct counterattack; collectivists opt for a high-context avoidance strategy, wait for the conflict to simmer down, and buy time to recoup their hurt feelings. Moreover, collectivists try to avoid any face-to-face conflict, hence they prefer to use a third-party mediator.

The distinction between the two types explains differences in goal setting and interactive strategies in the process of image negotiation. For individualists, the most important goal is to promote individual happiness and to protect their nation's self-image; they treat ingroups and outgroups as relatively equal; and they are consistent in displaying their national image. When involved in a conflict of identity negotiation, individualists are more likely to be aggressive and to show little concern for another's face. For collectivists, the top priority in a conflict situation is to maintain social harmony and enhance the nation's face and legitimacy in the international community. Collectivists make a clear distinction between ingroups and outgroups and tend to reveal more information to ingroup members, especially

when the news is negative and threatens the group's image. In defending their own image, collectivists are usually reactive, show more concern for one another's face, seek third-party mediation, or even remain silent, without facing directly the challenges imposed by their opponents.

Identifying these differences helps explain the dilemma of the Chinese in their image negotiation with the West. As a typically collectivist nation, China has mobilized both its statecraft and its population to host the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Some Western journalists equate this kind of collectivism to authoritarianism, neglecting the fact that most of the Chinese supported hosting the Olympic Games (Zhou, 2008). Although the remarkable success of the Beijing Olympics improved China's image, there still exists an insurmountable agenda gap between China and the West. As Feng and Hu (2008), then Sun (2009) point out, the Chinese media focused on the construction projects of the Olympic stadiums and gyms, on government-sponsored cultural events, and on marketing issues, while unfortunately the Western audiences and media cared more about the issues of Chinese human rights, political reform, nongovernmental organized cultural events, and environmental protection.

As a result, when presenting the nation's image, the Chinese media either report only the good news or defend themselves directly from the negative coverage of the Western media. The Chinese way of representing the national image in the media is often rejected by Westerners as propaganda or whitewash (Liu & He, 2006). Moreover, the failure of Chinese media to provide direct and detailed information when defending their stance tends to make them appear as insensitive, hesitating, uncertain, and evasive in the eyes of the West (Luther, 2002). The problem can be illustrated by the outbreak of poisoned milk powder and the devastation it caused just before the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games started (see 2008 Chinese Milk Scandal, n.d.). The Chinese government did not allow the domestic media to report these events because it wanted to save the nation's face. After the Beijing Olympic Games, when the news was released, Westerners were offended by the cover-up; but the Chinese government was unable even then to release the whole truth immediately. This further enlarged the gap of mistrust between China and the West. Intercultural misunderstandings or conflicts of this kind can easily be found in studies of media representation between China and the West (e.g., Dong et al., 2005; Goodman, 1998; Hotier, 2011; Liu, 2009; Liu & He, 2009; Peng, 2004). The question is: How can we effectively deal with this kind of intercultural conflicts in the process of media representation? The next section attempts to explore this problem.

Management of Intercultural Conflicts in the Media

Ting-Toomey (1999) points out that identity negotiation is embedded in the dialectical interaction between identity security and identity threat, and between identity inclusion and identity differentiation. Only after identities are recognized

and supported can interactants conduct a meaningful dialogue and negotiate intercultural agreements; and the effective way to reach this consensus and construct mutually desired identities is through the process of intercultural adaptation. As an integral part of identity negotiation, intercultural adaptation is a process through which participants change their cultural orientations, redefine their self-image, and enrich their cultural scripts (Kim, 2001). In other words, only through the process of intercultural adaptation can a successful image negotiation or the resolution of intercultural conflicts be reached. This results in a state of respect for each other's identity and creates a differentiating and interactive identity space for the emergence of a conjoint identity synchrony (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). In order to achieve the goal of a successful national image of the negotiation between China and the Western media, an effective strategy for managing the conflicts in the process of intercultural adaptation is to develop interculturality, through which intercultural sensitivity and intercultural awareness can be achieved to enhance reciprocal intercultural relations (Dai, 2010).

According to Kim (2001), cultural identity negotiation takes place in a physical or social space. Intersubjectivity constitutes the primary field where people interact with each other and co-produce the meaning of life. Through a mutually shared language, the self and the other coordinate their actions, develop patterned behaviors and common values, and define their identities. When both parties venture into another culture and re-socialize into a larger intercultural community, they begin to negotiate intercultural agreement, produce interculturality, and develop intercultural identity.

While intersubjectivity refers to the interpersonal connection between individuals in the same society, interculturality refers to the complex connection between and among cultures whose members negotiate intercultural agreements and mutually acceptable identities. As Dai (2010) argues, in the intercultural space, the self and the other are existentially separate and relationally asymmetrical, but they are assumed to be relatively independent partners who live in different worlds trying to develop mutuality and reciprocity. Interculturality is then a ground situated in-between cultural universals and cultural particularities, where intercultural communicators can meet each other in a full range of human relations. The space between the self and the other remains open in the sense that "each party recognizes his or her dependence upon the other, and each can allow the judgment of the respective other to be valid as an objection against oneself" (Honneth, 2003, p. 12).

As a space where communicators from different cultures coexist, interculturality helps people harness intercultural tensions. Differences are legitimized, appreciated, and treated as a dialogue promoter. Communicators with diverse cultural backgrounds can freely articulate their opinions and negotiate shared meanings and desired identities. With shared life experiences and the ability to take the role of the other, interactants are capable of reaching mutual understandings, finding where problems lie, and negotiating workable solutions. Thus intercultural tensions or conflicts can be constructively managed and changed into creative dynamics for the development of reciprocal intercultural relationships. Moreover, in re-establishing

the cultural membership, communicators synthesize diverse cultural elements and develop intercultural identity (Sussman, 2000). When the two parties share more commonalities and have a stable interactive space, it becomes easier for them to reach mutual understanding and intercultural agreements.

More specifically, interculturality provides a space in which intercultural sensitivity and intercultural awareness can be cultivated to enhance a reciprocal intercultural relation between two cultural groups. Intercultural sensitivity and intercultural awareness are conducive to identity recognition and validation.

Bennett (1986) considers intercultural sensitivity as the communicator's ability to develop a positive emotion toward cultural differences. It is a transformation process in which interactants' cultural orientation gradually changes from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Being ethnorelative means that interactants are more open to cultural others and capable of appreciating diversity. Intercultural sensitivity motivates people to understand and acknowledge other people's needs and to translate emotions into actions. With the development of intercultural sensitivity, interactants can better engage in others' lives and cultivate intercultural awareness (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Intercultural awareness refers to the understanding of cultural similarities and differences (Chen, 2010, Chen & Starosta, 1998). It provides people with a cultural map that reduces situational ambiguity and uncertainty. After acquiring intercultural sensitivity and intercultural awareness, one's perspective is broadened and the individual becomes a more interculturally competent person (Chen & Starosta, 1996). As Ting-Toomey (2005a, p. 226) indicates: "The competent identity negotiator emphasizes the importance of creative integrating knowledge and positive attitudinal factors, and putting them into mindful practices in everyday intercultural interactions."

To develop intercultural sensitivity, both Chinese and Westerners should drop old stereotypes and cultivate an open and positive attitude toward each other. It is necessary for China to transcend its humiliating history, no longer regard Westerners as cultural colonists or cultural imperialists, and further open up to the West. One particularly important step would be for the Chinese government to give its domestic media due freedom to express their views and communicate constructively with their Western counterparts (Feng & Hu, 2008). At the same time, the Western media should treat China as an equal and worthy partner by making more objective observations and by showing sympathy for the Chinese way of communication. As Perlmutter (2007) remarks, people in the West may have found fault with the Chinese government or with various aspects of the Chinese character, but basically they are fascinated and romantically attached to the Chinese culture.

To develop intercultural awareness requires that Chinese and Westerners learn more about the characteristics of each other's culture. Although China began to learn and study the West about two centuries ago, it mainly drew on Western science and technology, without adequately comprehending its cultural values. One urgent task for Chinese journalists is to learn more about Western cultural norms, values, and preferences and appropriately project the Chinese image in the mass

media (Duan & Zhou, 2007). With the development of China opening up to the world, Westerners have learnt about this country better than before. However, there is a need for Western people and journalists to dig deeper into Chinese cultural traditions and keep track of the country's current development. Only after becoming familiar with the Chinese pattern of communication can they portray a truthful and persuasive Chinese image (Zhou & Zheng, 2010).

In sum, the development of interculturality suggests that Chinese and Westerners not only legitimize diverse ways of image representation, but also make efforts to incorporate each other's values in order to engage in a sustainable interaction. In the space of interculturality, Chinese media and Western media are interrelated and complementary to each other. The faithful and mutually accepted Chinese image comes from repeated and mindful negotiations. Chinese journalists should learn to take Westerners' reports as a valid portrayal of the Chinese reality and appreciate Western criticism. In reflecting and integrating the Western view and their own perspectives, Chinese journalists can create more convincing images of China for their Western counterparts. In addition, as argued by Wu and Fang (2010), Westerners have long taken Chinese media reports as a partial and unfaithful representation of the Chinese reality, or simply regarded them as political propaganda. They need to comprehend the strength of the Chinese style of communication in its unique cultural context and treat it as an equally valid way of expression as their own. Through this process of mutual adaptation, Chinese and Westerners are more likely to reach intercultural consensus and achieve conjoint identity synchrony.

Conclusion

National image as an integral part of national identity exhibits the nation's general character or personality. It highlights the nation's appearance in the public arena; thus national image can be interpreted as the nation's face. The construction of national image is a negotiating process that involves both the nation's self-definition and its evaluation of the international community. It is quite normal for a nation-state to make use of mass media to create a favorable national image. Because media representation is molded by the nation's own cultural orientation, intercultural conflicts are inevitable in the process of building the national image.

On the basis of the above argument, this chapter explores the construction of national image in the media and the management of intercultural conflicts. The first part of the chapter explicates the nature of national image by conceptualizing it as a generalized definition of a nation's identity and by treating it as an open-ended negotiating process that consists of a nation's self-definition and definition of the international society. Then the relationship between the mass media and national image negotiation is discussed. It is argued that the mass media play an important role in the construction of national image and that, in order to negotiate the desired images, nation-states always intend to present their favorable characteristics and to dilute or conceal their unfavorable characteristics by deliberately using the

agenda-setting function of mass media to their advantage or by framing the news for the establishment of a positive national image. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games is then used to illustrate how the Chinese government constructed its national image through the media representation of the Games and how the Chinese government had to face the opposite, negative media representation of the Games from Western news agencies, due to differences in cultural value orientations.

In the second part of the chapter the authors analyzed intercultural conflicts caused by media representation in the process of national image negotiation. They found that intercultural conflicts often arise in the process of national image negotiation from differences such as between individualism and collectivism, direct and indirect expression styles, and personal and group facework. The authors point out that, on the basis of its liberal traditions, the individualistic West values individual freedom and social justice, whereas the collectivistic East, informed as it is by Confucian doctrines, values social harmony and group interest. Hence the two cultural types embrace competing values and adopt different image construction strategies. In the case of the Chinese, various cultural conflicts arise in the negotiating process. Chinese media give priority to the nation's image and interests and focus on the positive aspects of social reality, while Western media give priority to individual interests and seek to reveal social evils. Although the successful hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games helped improve the Chinese image, the huge cultural gap between China and the West proves to be a serious challenge to Chinese image construction.

Finally, the chapter proposes the development of interculturality as an effective strategy to achieve the goal of successful national image negotiation between the Chinese and the Western media for managing conflicts in the process of intercultural adaptation. The authors argue that only through developing interculturality can the abilities of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural awareness be cultivated to enhance a reciprocal relation between the two cultural groups. The claim deserves further exploration and is still subject to empirical validation in future research.

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39

Play Theory and Public Media
A Case Study in Kenya Editorial Cartoons

P. Mark Fackler and Levi Obonyo

Discussions of media theory normally start with the conventional apparatus of uses and gratifications, agenda setting, and the four theories approach. This chapter turns the conversation toward common play, the first public activity most humans learn and practice. The authors suggest that, in developing democracies that cannot assume universal literacy, media users concerned about public life receive initial and meaningful information on politics through conventions associated with the editorial cartoon. We argue that cartoon viewers learn through this play mode rather than from public debate or through a rational articulation of issues. These later movements may follow, but the first and most effective appeal of the cartoon is at the level of play. Theories on the meaning and impact of play overlap with the more conventional theories of media at just this point: benefits, identities, and ironies shaping viewers and readers gathering first impressions about the public sphere, the commons, public life.

Long interviews with five leading editorial cartoonists in Nairobi, Kenya, reveal a subculture of art, influence, and content restraints two steps removed from the traditional roles of journalist and editor, but only one step away from that of editorial columnist. In a young democracy like Kenya, with low literacy rates, inadequate rural road systems, and no internal production of ink or newsprint, editorial cartoons are among the most influential elements in the avidly perused newspapers. The five cartoonists interviewed here are celebrities in this culture – their names, humor, art, and commentary are on daily display. They describe their work in ways uncommon for the press establishment, and they evince values like courage, criticism of entrenched power, and passion for justice – values that the press establishment reveres, yet practices much more conservatively. The authors use play theory to explain the significance of editorial cartooning in Kenya.

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Artists and journalists commonly follow different development tracks. Previous research among Kenyan journalists revealed a sense of inner drive that had been stirred during adolescence and led writers and journalists to careers of observation, political curiosity, and capacity to use written English felicitously. Formal education was important: in most cases a baccalaureate diploma was essential for a first employment. Education in values was also important; values learned in school were eventually codified in a small booklet titled *Code of Conduct and Practice in Journalism in Kenya*, which was published in 2001 by the Media Council of Kenya, a quasi government organ for regulating media. Kenyan journalists were expected to keep those booklets close by, to use them as textual reference when at ethical crossroads, even as their professional–moral development took an oral and organizational turn (Fackler & Baker, 2010).

For the much smaller community of Kenyan editorial cartoonists, these early notions of inner drive and professional ambition followed a different path. The cartoonists' mature contributions to the public sphere are being accomplished in a different work setting. Their values are governed by and developed from a different set of criteria. The impact of their work on public opinion is arguably greater, but less studied than the impact of word-based news or of the work of editorial writers.

Interviews for this study were conducted during the summers of 2011 and 2012. Five active professional cartoonists agreed to give long interviews during which researchers probed their motivations, purposes, and positions in the complex Nairobi publishing trade. Do cartoonists embody traditional notions of press theory? Are they classical liberals, creating political discussion at its roughest cutting edge? Are they change agents, reformers committed to social responsibility, spirits akin from afar to Edward R. Murrow and Walter Lippmann? The African equivalent of these trends has been long in coming, their emergence probably slowed down, as Obonyo (2011) has argued, by a different social milieu that has informed the evolution of the craft of journalism. Or is their place in the game perhaps more like that of Ice-T – rapper and activist, defying convention, using language and line in an obvious exhibition of hyperbole? Are they rather irritants, counter-cultural champions (Christians, Fackler, & Ferre, 2012, p. 263)? In this we have seen many African trailblazers – Ngugi wa Thiongo and Okot p'Bitek, among others. We pursued these interviews in the interest of understanding editorial cartooning as a public medium, and we came to see it better as public play.

The five interview subjects of this study comprise nearly the entire population of professional political cartoonists in Kenya. Celestine Wamiru is the only woman in the group: the only female who has taken up this male-dominated trade to produce editorial cartoons professionally in Kenya. Without preference or prejudice, we begin with her.

"Celeste," her byline, draws for *People*, a newspaper formerly owned by political activist Kenneth Matiba, who began it as a counter-balancing alternative voice to the more mainstream *Daily Nation* and *Standard* newspapers. *People* was established in the early 1990s, as a voice of protest and a political outlet against the then

dominant administration of President Daniel arap Moi. The *People*'s war chest for social change has been hit hard by libel suits in recent years, and the newspaper's voice was somewhat dulled by changes that have occurred in its ownership. Today *People* belongs in the stable of Mediamax, a holding company that owns other media such as the TV station K24 and the radio station Kameme. These are associated with Uhuru Kenyatta, a scion of the first president, then an inside player in both President Daniel arap Moi's (who succeeded his father) and President Mwai Kibaki's government. Now he himself is president (Nyanjom, 2012). The paper is now the closest one can get in Kenya to an official newspaper. Celestine has brought life and laughter to the editorial page with her drawing talent and feminist perspective on Kenyan culture.

Celestine's upbringing in Western Kenya, entirely carried out by a single mother with a robust vision of what daughters can become in a largely male-driven country with male-managed media, inspired her to work at her art and develop her young skill. Celestine entered the professional drawing world through commercial art. Her joining the art industry was particularly intriguing because, when she entered university, she had qualifications to enable her to apply in other fields. In a country where education is at a premium – and even more so university education, where admission to professional courses is extremely competitive – Celestine's conscious choice of the field of art, which was considered less competitive and less prestigious, was initially puzzling, until her motivations were understood.

For Celestine, the political and social world of East Africa is open for satire and critique, with one deeply felt exception: no mocking or satirizing of single women, their children, their aspirations, their accomplishments, or their potential for influence in the public sphere. Celestine's cartoons will not play on the pervasive stereotype of the rural–illiterate–bumpkin big-featured (or small-) "Wanjiku." Nor will she draw on the pronounced stereotype of sex-craved males having their lascivious way. She once stood down her editor, who wanted the next day's cartoon to show the leer of a politician up the skirt of a soon-to-be-bedded naïve young woman. "I don't draw cartoons I'd be embarrassed to have my daughter see," Celestine said. Or her mother, we suspect. Celestine's values are not prudish but reflect long-felt sympathies for women in a culture where marriage and child bearing, minimal education and much field toil are traditional norms. In this she is not alone. Many cartoonists will not touch fields that they would be embarrassed about. It does appear, however, that the threshold for embarrassment does vary for them, as expressed by other cartoonists. Like her mother, Celestine is a single-parent mother whose only child, a daughter, is taught that professional and personal values ought to be woven from the same cloth.

Frank Odoi, born in Ghana, came to Kenya in the 1970s, to draw medical and scientific illustrations for Nairobi University. His career grew to include daily cartoons in *Nation*, *Standard*, *Weekly Review*; work for the *BBC Focus on Africa* magazine; and work for newspapers across the African continent and beyond. He created two well-known series of comic books and directed the media company Four Dimension Initiative. Regrettably and ironically, Frank died in a communal

taxi (called a *matatu*), in a road accident, in April 2012. His *Driving Me Crazy* comic strip regularly drew attention to Kenya's notoriously reckless private minibus transportation problems – the same that would take away his life.

At his cramped office in downtown Nairobi (which he shared with four other cartoonists), Frank spoke of his early-life discovery of artistic skill and the troubles it caused him. (This and all subsequent quotations without a reference are quotations from unpublished interviews, July 2011.)

> Drawing is a talent. I think I was born with it. I remember my late mother was very angry with me once because I was scribbling with charcoal all over the place. It was my dad who actually encouraged me and bought me plain paper sheet, pencils, water-colors, any time he got the chance. Once in Primary 3 I was told to draw on the board for some boys who were being disciplined but could not draw at all. I was told to draw, and my drawing made the older boys embarrassed, so I took some knocks on my head after school. That's why I'm bald now.

Frank laughed at his own joke.

In 1974 Frank was hired by a medical school in Ghana to produce illustrations. "The work was not what I really wanted to do, going into the mortuary looking at cadavers. But through that I came to Nairobi, doing scientific illustrations for the University of Nairobi, data graphs and insects, many insects." One contact led to another, and by 1981 Frank was drawing a strip for Hilary N'gweno at *Nairobi Times*, then for the *Daily Nation*, where Frank was the first person to do a daily cartoon. In the 1980s, Frank recalled, there was no safe topic associated with the government, unless a member of parliament or some lesser politico embarrassed himself and the cartoon could play on what everyone already knew. Once when his cartoon came too close to State House, members of the investigative police arrived unannounced at his house. But, once inside, they observed a photograph of Frank with then President Daniel arap Moi. The investigation closed therewith.

> I always reminded myself that I am a foreigner in Kenya and cannot stick my neck out too much. Friends would be detained in Nyayo House [a police interrogation facility], kept a long time, and I wanted no part of that. I began to get scared, really really scared. You would see a white car come up near you, and panic. People were taken in those white cars. It was a bad time.

Gradually Nairobi cartoonists began to draw even images of President Moi, from the back; he was identified in the art by his omnipresent *rungu* – a little gold-coated ubiquitous stick he held in his right hand as a symbol of his political leadership. Frank's office mate, Paul Kelemba (Maddo), once drew a front image of Mr. Moi for *Society* magazine. "Every issue was bought up by the government. They went around and picked up every one. Paul was testing the waters, but he stopped drawing Moi for a long time after that."

Frank Odoi found success in Kenya, and he delights in it.

> When someone somewhere is seeing my work, it makes me very happy. I don't know if it's a weakness or what, but I'm so happy once I do something for someone and the person appreciates it. I get paid immediately. When I draw and someone says: "Oh you did that! Thanks a lot. It's beautiful!" I get paid straightaway. I'm so happy, before anything else.

Victor Ndulo, cartoonist for the *Star* newspaper, when asked which his favorite characters are, indicates how far cartoonists have come:

> Politicians … I would say Kibaki [the then sitting president] or Raila [the then prime minister] … because they are at a point where they will determine what happens in the next five years. If I don't upset them, if I don't call attention to what they are doing, they might get comfortable.

Ndulo, the youngest of the five leading cartoonists interviewed for this chapter, does not want leaders to ever become too comfortable.

> I'm an introvert who discovered drawing in high school. I don't talk a lot. But I express myself through drawing. And I've always felt that there was a need for a divergent view. People want to look at things in a particular way … I love the divergent view. The best way to see something from another perspective is by drawing cartoons.

Victor knows that his freedom to challenge authority and political leaders is a gift from a long line of divergent speakers, writers, and cartoonists. He referred appreciatively to his own two mentors, Maddo and Gado, the two top celebrities in Kenyan cartooning. "They mentored me a lot," Victor said, remembering his effort to break into newspapers in Nairobi.

> It was difficult, but they realized there was a need for more cartoonists. It's good for the industry, good for the newspapers. Otherwise cartoonists may be snobbish, if they are few.

> I learned one valuable lesson from Gado. He told me never to let editors set the agenda. Here's what happens. Some editor will get a brilliant idea and say, "Let's get the cartoonist to draw it." So they come to me, "Victor, we have this brilliant idea." I tell them, "No, I won't do it." They get upset and say, "Why not? It's brilliant." I say, "It appears brilliant to you but, unless I feel the cartoon, unless I understand where you are coming from … you know, the cartoonist will come from here [points to heart] … so I can't draw this cartoon for you. If you think it's a brilliant cartoon, draw it yourself." This is the only way to be a cartoonist. You always set your agenda.

Ndulo spoke of cartooning as a contest, even a battle.

> You have to protect that space [artistic creativity, integrity]. Any cartoonist who allows that space to be infringed … there is something you lose. Editors will dictate. And there's

> another space I fight for. Editors will say, "Draw like Maddo, like Gado." I may not draw as well as they draw, but I draw as me. If you lose that space, you've lost your soul.

Creative integrity is not the only battle. Politics in Kenya is highly competitive, though not unique, money and political pressure being the two heaviest levers pressed by leading parties and politicians. Young cartoonists, eager to join the elite ranks, are especially vulnerable. Ndulo has been offered large sums for placing cartoons agreeable to partisan campaigns, large sums with promises of more – a dilemma anywhere. But in an economy resistant to upward mobility, the appeal can be irresistible. "They were very, very persistent," Ndulo said. "But I looked around and noticed that Gado and Maddo had never taken these jobs. It's really not about money. Not that kind of money. I turned the job down." He was referring to a specific incident when a politician came to him and wanted to use his influence to make Ndulo draw that politician in a specific light, or to draw the opponent in a specific way and be paid for that.

On one other point of major cultural significance for him, Ndulo expresses his personal values despite the pressure to draw.

> I will not blaspheme. You may find this hard to believe, but I am religious. I believe religion is important in life. I've seen cartoons in the West blaspheme. They are entitled to freedom of expression; I believe in that too. But I do not draw to make fun of religion, disabled people, or to make fun of tragedies.

For Ndulo there is no difference between religions. The reverence he has for his Christian faith applies to other faiths as well. Yet there is a point to be made here, that religion in the Kenyan media and in the larger Kenyan society is one area of constant contention. In the recent past several media houses have received bomb threats for caricaturing Islam, and in one case a security guard in a media house was killed because the radio station was running a broadcast on evangelism across faiths. But Kenyans, as is true of many Africans, are deeply religious, as John Mbiti (1969) discusses.

What, then, of a cartoonist's role in public violence, such as occurred prior to and following the national election of December 2007? Ndulo said:

> I did not avoid that time. The situation was not funny. I felt my cartoons must make our leaders think. My favorite was a cartoon of two political leaders in a pick-up truck speeding downhill. But not in the cab. They stood on top of the cab with a steering wheel, purporting to be taking our country somewhere, but really plummeting downhill.

When Ndulo draws, who is in his mind, what audience?

> I can't draw for everybody, but for people who want to dig deeper. That's my target. Cartoons cannot be cryptic, but not simplistic either. I want to appeal to the intellect. If it's simplistic, then it's just a good drawing, good only for a day. I want to make cartoons that have a long shelf-life. I want to help people think.

Paul Kelemba (Maddo) draws for *Standard*, one of Nairobi's two leading newspapers and Kenya's oldest newspaper. He is a media celebrity, and he understands the costs of that role from years of mostly political cartooning. More than the

conversation of other cartoonists, Kelemba's conversation revolves around the major political figures in Kenya's relatively young democracy. He was the first to depict in a cartoon the country's second president, Daniel arap Moi. The first president, Jomo Kenyatta, was a revered senior citizen at the beginning of his presidency in 1963 and ruled until his death in 1978. Because of his place in the struggle for Kenyan independence and the place of the elderly in African culture, Kenyatta was basically out of bounds for cartoonists and other humorists.

Maddo would have become an accountant, had parents had their way. The main barrier to that career was an aversion to mathematics. His road to fame and fortune in cartooning was rough at best, coming up as it did through *Coast Weekly* in Mombasa. When it folded, he went back to the labor pool until a graphic design firm gave him another chance; then to *Viva* magazine, to *Daily Nation* (Kelemba took over the daily cartoon from Frank Odoi), and finally to *Standard*, where he still focuses on politics but admits that a younger audience has different interests, and he's after those readers too.

Kelemba speaks of Mr. Moi as though the former president were a measure of a cartoonist's success.

> I started introducing Moi with a cap. I would camouflage him, disguise him. I was testing new ground. I was looking for a way for a daily newspaper to put Moi on the editorial page. Our editors steered away from Moi. They feared trouble. Me and my cartoonist colleagues would have drawn the man anytime. Still, times were tough. Guys got detained. But I wasn't afraid. I was hot-headed, wanted to be famous.

While contributing to *Standard*, Maddo freelanced for others. His client *Society* magazine gave him the nod on drawing Mr. Moi.

> One day they said, "Let's do Moi." I said, "Are you sure?" I mean, newspaper offices had been petrol-bombed for such things already. So we ran a cover sketch of Mr. Moi that Monday, and nothing happened. A year earlier, a cartoon of Moi would have got you collared by agents on the street. But nothing. Moi was running ahead of opponents at the time.
>
> Actually, Moi loved some humor, oddly for a benevolent dictator. I think when he saw that cartoon he loved it, maybe didn't understand it, but made no backlash at all. After that, the floodgates opened. Gado [cartoonist Godfrey Mwampembwa] had just arrived from Tanzania, and he started drawing Moi. Cartoons of Moi became the new normal. No more fear.

Benchmarks such as these are lore among Nairobi's small cartooning community. In the 2002 national elections voters ousted Mr. Moi's party, KANU (Kenya African National Union), replacing it with the Rainbow Coalition and its candidate Mwai Kibaki, a man who seemingly did not care about protecting or managing his public image. Maddo recalls a honeymoon period in early 2003, which soon stressed the country's cartoonists and editorialists. "We turned around and started getting critical, when Kibaki began acting like Moi. There was no turning back, not after ten years of multi-partyism," Maddo said.

With the Moi image in print and the Kibaki image a free market commonplace, what puts fear into Kenya's cartoonists today? Maddo was reluctant to admit it, but nevertheless cited broad cultural values that would prevent him from going to the extremes of, say, South African cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro. "We don't depict old men naked," said Maddo, referring to controversial cartoons of Jacob Zuma, South Africa's head of state. What, then, stops the pen?

Religion has become the new Mr. Moi: the forbidden, or at least troublesome subject. "We can bash Christians, that's very easy," Maddo winks.

> We can have fun with the archbishops, or eastern Buddhists. But Muslims … I mean, anything on an Islamic issue and my editors are going to come down. I've been threatened for just having an Arabic inscription in a frame. I was told: "Prepare for your imminent demise." It was frightening. Luckily I had a Muslim write to me, saying that he loved my stuff but recommended that I please avoid using such inscriptions. So we published that letter as a kind of apology – I did not apologize directly – and I hope that the guy who threatened my life read that letter. You know the *Standard* office in Mombasa had been fire-bombed already.

Kelemba's skill at drawing – not a university training, like Celestine's – opened the door to success. Passion keeps him in the race, he claims. After 30 years of publishing cartoons, he still feels the thrill of the craft:

> I have a passion for it. Drawing has to be in you, down to the bone. It is not something that you acquire. Many cartoonists come and go, get tired, fade away. You have to be dedicated. When my brain comes alive I work deep into the night. I love doing that. And I watch people. I love watching people. I make very small observations about people. At a restaurant earlier today, I watched customers come in, look around, then head for a seat next to a wall. Others did the same. When the wall seats were full, people began then to fill in the center. It's a very primitive instinct, you know, crawling into a cave. You want to see the enemy coming.

Maddo's natural audience is people who weathered the storms of the 1970s and 1980s and are now hopeful for peaceful and fair elections and for democratically accountable rule. But that audience is aging. Youth are not so drawn to political nuance. To stay at the top, Kelemba must adapt. "My own children," Paul reveals, "they're always watching a screen … phone, play station, computer. Rarely books. So I am changing from political commentary to the world of social media. I'm still trying to figure out my geography on this thing."

Godfrey Mwampembwa (Gado) is one of the most recognized personalities in the region who are not politicians. He may be the one commentator whom politicians want on their side; but his reputation for satire and bite gives Gado the publicity edge.

He started drawing when he was in his teens, found work at newspapers and magazines in Tanzania, and in 1992 became the cartoonist for the *Daily Nation*'s editorial pages. In 2002 he developed and began running a TV satire called

The XYZ Show, which subsequently received Ford Foundation support. His drawings and television satire have established Gado as perhaps Kenya's leading social–political commentator. Others in this study referred to Gado as their mentor; none as their equal.

Like Odoi and a few others who worked in Kenya in years gone by (and are not reviewed in this chapter), Gado is a transplant to Kenya. He worked hard to learn local politics and culture, and when success came, he realized that he had created a reputation for free criticism of every quarter. He takes on all topics and all characters. The hesitation to draw cartoons associated with Islam, outlined earlier, seems not to bother Gado, who has satirized even suicide terrorists by wondering how women bombers would collect rewards comparable to the 72 virgins claimed by their (mostly) male colleagues. Outrageous. Offensive. Sure to provoke, perhaps even to invite personal threats. Gado seems to get away with it.

Gado satirizes common stereotypes. He has depicted the common Kenyan young woman, Wanjiku, as particulary intelligent, sure of what she wants and very smart, yet still a village girl. He satirizes members of the president's staff as quite unsure of what they want, who they are, and what their often contradictory statements (in cartoon balloons) are supposed to mean.

> The *Nation* has allowed me freedom and I am also a bit stubborn. Sometimes they insist we should not publish a cartoon, but I say we should. I have sneaked in quite a few cartoons that have put me in trouble

– he said, without fear or worry over future employment. At Gado's level of success, he sets his own direction.

The history of editorial cartooning in Kenya is, in a sense, the history of the newspapers in Kenya, only that the latter has had a strong influence on the former.

The first newspaper in Kenya, the *Taveta* chronicle, was published in 1896 by protestant church missionaries around the Kenyan coast. This early newspaper did not have cartoons, but cartoons were not going to be out for too long. The chronicle was soon followed by Kenya's early newspapers – among them the East African *Standard*, established in 1902 as the *African Standard*.

The development of Kenyan newspapers was then heavily influenced by Kenya's colonial history. The racial divide informed the rise of these newspapers, some aligning themselves to the white community, others to the African community, and still others to the Asian community. None of these categories adopted a uniform position on the social issues of the day. For instance, among the white community there were papers that adopted the conservative view, were aligned with the white administration, and opposed any liberal ideas of independence or accommodation of other communities. Among these were newspapers owned by farmers and some owned through government proxy. Although the *Standard* was founded by an Asian, Jeevanjee, the enterprise would soon be sold to white owners, who positioned it as a conservative voice. But there were also liberal white newspapers, some associated with the church, and these advocated a more accommodating approach on the issues of race and the future of Kenya.

Similarly, among the African-owned newspapers some were militant and advocated immediate and complete independence for the country. Harry Thuku's *Baraza* was one of these. But there were also other media that focused on a conciliatory approach and were interested in the preservation of the African culture and in making a place for it. This same divide informed the positions taken by the Asian associated press. Some of its representatives were militant, others were moderate, while still others were nonchalant.

In the main, the media are businesses. The early cartoons in the Kenyan media were used to illustrate products that were being advertised. Most of these cartoons were to be found in the Asian and European associated media, because the audience for these media had the economic resources needed to buy the newspapers and to consume the products (or at least had access to such resources). The *Standard* was particularly prominent in the production of commercial cartoons of this sort. However, the newspaper did not use indigenous cartoons and seldom depicted black people.

The first Kenyan cartoonist came to the craft by way of an accident. Mzee Edward Gitau started out as an electrician stationed in Thika, a satellite town on the outskirts of Nairobi. But, while on an electric pole, he slipped and fell, breaking his arm. In his youth he had been a Disney fan and watched many of the Walt Disney Company cartoons. He had also been familiar with Asterix, particularly the episodes set up in the Congo. But there were also other influences from South Africa, where cartooning had started almost a century earlier. Some of those influences had found their way through Malawi to Tanzania. Out of work and out of hospital, and with one of his arms immobilized, Gitau turned to caricaturing for fun. This was one decade and a half before Kenya's independence in 1964. Earlier, in search of adventure, he had travelled to the southern part of Tanzania, and out of his travels was born his cartoon strip *Juha Kalulu* in 1949. *Juha Kalulu* still runs today in Kenya, in the Swahili-language daily *Taifa Leo*, and may very well be the world's longest running cartoon strip. When Gitau returned to Kenya on the eve of the nation's independence, other artists started joining him, but most of them did not leave their imprint in the field for long. It was a turbulent time in Kenya's history.

The newspapers that are more established today had not yet emerged at that time, to identify with the African audience immediately. That was something first achieved by the *Nation* newspaper, which was founded in 1959. Unlike other media, immediately after independence this newspaper appointed an African, Hilary Ngweno, as its editor-in-chief. This was an inspiration to blacks. But the man who would inspire African cartoons was an Irish migrant to Kenya: Terry Hirst. Then an educator at the then Kenyatta College, now Kenyatta University, Hirst teamed up with Ngweno, who would soon leave the *Nation* to open his own media line. One of the first publications they started was *Joe*. *Joe* was a magazine that featured cartoons and had only illustrated stories. And yet these illustrations were serious social commentaries. Most of the illustrations were by Hirst, who was later to be joined by Odoi and a few understudies. It was the works of Hirst that would later inspire people like Mado – who in the 1960s was growing up in the coastal town of Mombasa.

The influence of *Joe* on the entire Kenyan media field could not be understated. Immediately after independence the population was still largely illiterate and cartoons provided an opportunity for the public with limited literary skills to access the media. But not only that: the media was still fairly elitist, targeting the white population. *Joe*, on the other hand, was targeting the African population and thus received immediate acceptance.

The initial influence on Kenyan cartoons had come from outside the country. There were people like Philip Nduguru, a Tanzanian adventurer who was travelling the world and stopped by in Nairobi to draw cartoons for some of the local newspapers; and there was influence from Uganda and Ghana as well. Kenyan cartoonists were few and far beween until Paul Kelemba's arrival on the scene.

Paul Kelemba and Godfrey Mwampembwa have been very influential among the current generation of Kenyan cartoonists. Their cartoons have played an influential part in the sale of newspapers and are not limited to newspapers only.

Three Prescient Scenes

At Freedom Corner, Uhuru Park, in downtown Nairobi, in the spring of 1992, Kenyan activist, the late Wangari Maathai, led mothers, wives, and sisters of political prisoners, in a public call demanding the release of their family members, who had been incarcerated by the second president of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi. At the time, Moi was floundering in his effort to make his one-party rule into the law of the land. Single party rule had been the standard operating procedure since Kenya gained independence in 1963, despite pressure from the United States and others for Kenya to open the nation's political process. Enforcing the KANU regime required a very tough schedule of police surveillance and warrantless searches, attested by the senior cartoonists interviewed here.

At Freedom Corner, just across the highway from Nyayo House – Moi's secret police interrogation facility – the women kept vigil. When police came to beat them, the women stood their ground and bared their breasts, as if to say, like mothers to their own sons: "Shame to you, I curse you for exposing me, for abusing me." Later on Maathai was asked why these protestors resorted to such measures, extreme by all the standards of the day. She replied: "It's the silence that hurts" (Branch, 2011, p. 189). Historian Daniel Branch notes that Maathai and others were taking advantage of "new forms of mass communication" as the government was losing its monopoly on broadcasting and its near-monopoly on publishing. Yet it was not mass communication in the standard sense. It was mass protest, sure to get blurred mass media coverage and equally sure to spark furious reaction from all sides. No rocks, no clashes or torches or attempts at self-defense. Women, young and old, doing the unthinkable, stopping the regime in its tracks – a world-class protest of immense courage and personal cost. We will return to this episode in a moment.

We play because play is the first order of human business, wrote Johan Huizinga in his 1950 classic *Homo ludens*. Before inventing institutions, or even alphabets,

we humans created action as the golden mean of instinct and will, and we called it play – a meaningful, sensate, essential part of the scheme of life. From play came ritual, poetry, music and dancing, political campaigning, and warfare. Play rules are the origin of international law. "Once they are broken, society falls into barbarism and chaos" (Huizinga, 1950, p. 173).

The press also plays – in its headlines, news columns, and feature articles. The "game" of power and privilege is the germ of news reportage. Elites of entertainment, sport, and business rise to prominence as players in a roughly ruled game, culture. Through the media, we treat cultural elites as children treat their peers and animal pets: as participants in a game who, through play, maintain and transform relationships, generate wealth, and make clear the ambitions and assumptions that generate community.

This study of editorial cartooning in East Africa takes as its framework the assumption that cartoons are among the "most read" features of the press; that cartoons depict in play form the contests woven through a culture and lived out in neighborhoods and at street corners, on riverbanks, and in posh business lunches; that cartoonists are propagandists in much the same way as poets, playwrights, and composers are. Their gift is skill at satire and hyperbole captured in a drawing. They are players in an extraordinary arena of culture, influential beyond their "game." They generate play, which becomes both an interpretive political act and a release valve for the losers of political maneuvering. In cartoons, those without political power challenge parliamentarians and police chiefs. Children show a wisdom higher than that of priests. Women show the power of a military general. Street vendors are the wiser; the bishop's vestry, a sign of pompous cultural disconnect. Hawkers (vegetables, belts, pirated music) proliferate on Nairobi streets – the lowest, easiest targets for arrest and confiscation. In cartoons they outwit the Sheriff of Nottingham's keystone cops every time. Cartoons push out the bellies of the shirt-and-tie crowd, overstuffed with the people's produce. Cartoons make sages of the likes of Otieno and Wanjiku – your common street characters – as their counterpoints, dummies of cabinet ministers. In cartoons, pretense and posturing are given the scorn they deserve, the simple word the honor it needs. Cartoons play at public virtue, unattainable for now, but who knows how the next turn may rearrange the fates. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz takes a theory of play to its psychosocial center in his famous analysis of a cockfight in Bali. These Balinese cockfights he called "deep play," trading on Bentham's observation that high stakes present irrational choices that a legal system should oppose. Indeed, anthropologists are not often in the middle of police action, but it was a police raid of a cockfight early in Geertz's fieldwork in Bali that opened his access to the culture. In Geertz's rendering, the Balinese cockfight is a "simulation of the social matrix, the involved system of … villages, kin-groups, irrigations societies, temple congregations, 'castes' – in which its devotees live" (Geertz, 1972, p. 18). In the cockfight, Balinese man "sees a dimension of his own subjectivity … [he] forms and discovers his temperament and his society's temper at the same time" (p. 28). The intricate "rules" associated with pairing the cocks, betting, borrowing, paying,

winning, and losing are "like playing with fire only not getting burned … you come dangerously close to the expression of open and direct interpersonal and intergroup aggression, but not quite, because, after all, it is 'only a cockfight'" (p. 22). Similarly, the cartoon equalizes social status. Wanjiku is usually shown to have common sense, while caricatures of political leaders are playing half-blind in their lust for power, wealth, or just another day before the collapse of their petty regime. Wisdom resides with the people who struggle to accommodate a leader's nearly childish appetites. Readers of cartoons sense that, at the end of the day, Wanjiku will eat at her own fire and will sleep near her own people. Political leadership will trip over its exaggerated foibles and general tomfoolery. We will return to this episode in a moment.

In the United States, the tradition of Halloween in late October is such a game. Children dress in costumes and knock on the doors of strangers' homes, demanding candy with an imperious cry. Trick or treat. It is a cartoon holiday. Pirates, monsters, celebrities – but only small children so dressed – are requiring a payment in sweets for the postponement of harm. Like the Balinese cockfight, Halloween has its rules, safety nets, excesses, mutations, and genuine malice. Each occurrence, however, is cartoon theater, a suspension of social rules for playful acting out of arrangements that subvert power and position: the least are the greatest, as in ancient ambitions (Gospel of Matthew 5: 19).

Three Episodes in the Context of Human Development

Early childhood researchers have long known that play encourages confidence, self-esteem, social skills, vocabulary growth, self-control, memory, and cognitive flexibility – the "executive functions" consistently linked to academic and professional success.

An education that permits and guides play has become an experimental laboratory deeply opposed to the tactics of memorization and of success measured by standardized tests. While the experiment shows promising results, educational bureaucracies still strongly favor the "drill and kill" method. "We drill more because they [young students] can't pay attention, but they can't pay attention because they don't have these underlying play skills, so we drill more. It's pathetic," said Deborah Leong, a researcher in the tradition of Lev Vygotsky (quoted in Bartlett, 2011). Vivian Gussin Paley agrees, noting that time taken from play, especially role playing and storytelling, can produce in children retarded emotional and intellectual growth.

Vygotsky believed that adults interpret reality through the use of mediators, "something that stands as an intermediary between an environmental stimulus and an individual's response to that stimulus" (Bodrova & Leong, 1996, p. 69). Unfamiliar situations require "external overt mediators," as in the case of driving a car with an unfamiliar shifting pattern. These overt mediators function as a scaffolding, helping the learner to transition from "maximum assisted performance to independent performance" (p. 70).

Editorial cartoons may be understood as a visual mediator, leading the viewer/reader from political angst to understanding, via humor, identification, exaggeration, and play. The viewer/reader is an onlooker to political power, subject to it, largely unable to affect it, and in many ways troubled by its threats to his/her welfare. The cartoon provides interpretive power, enabling political acuity and community response, a partial leveling of the power playfield, a mediation between subject and citizen.

Cartoonists themselves express the kind of delight that Paley (2004, p. 83) finds in teachers who "are curious and begin to ask" about the inventions by which citizens frame their participation in affairs of state. Their inventions both create and transform others' creations. In Paley's words, curiosity in a teacher is the first step in "climbing the ladder alongside" the culture's storytellers (p. 83).

Conclusion

Why should artists draw? Why make cartoons?

At the turn of the millennium, former UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor wrote a treatise titled *The World Ahead*. In it, he elaborated on the state of the world in these terms:

> We cannot fail to observe the increase in soul-sickness at the very heart of the most prosperous societies, best protected from misfortune. The heart itself seems prey to a curious void. Indifference and passivity grow. There is an ethical desert. Passions and emotions are blunted. Peoples' eyes are empty and solidarity evaporates … The future seems unreadable … Long-term vision is discredited. Now and then we are truly sick at heart. (Mayor, 2001, p. 5)

Add to this the grim titles of recent scholarship on Africa: 1994, *Continent in Chaos* (G. Ayyitey); 2002, *A Continent Self-Destructs* (P. Schwab); 2004, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair* (D. Branch).

And add also the tough question posed in Emmanuel Katangole's *The Sacrifice of Africa*. Why, he asks, after so much aid from churches, NGOs, Western governments, the World Bank – why is the politics of greed, dispossession, state brutality, hunger, poverty, and corruption still the story of Africa (Katangole, 2010, p. 9).

For solutions, Mayor (2001, p. 20) called for four "contracts." The third he labeled the cultural contract, focusing on education, languages, and media access – especially the social media, with their unprecedented cultural architecture. Katangole (2010, p. 18) calls for a refreshment of story, a recovery and a restatement, from the people themselves, of a cultural past and a hopeful future.

Mayor, Katangole, and other communications scholars elaborating a third way between Enlightenment liberalism and hierarchical authoritarianism are also calling for a communications of shalom – *emayiana*, as the Maasai of Kenya say: a story not of fatally ill cultures but of people engaged together in the often sacrificial work of building a future that is more secure, free, and prosperous than the past.

We submit that the way toward that future, in terms of communications theory and strategy – the way to jump-start the grounded story of shalom – is through the playful points of light generated by cartoonists, who want us to see something new, reach for something just beyond the possible, and as that reach entails sweat and toil, to laugh, to see the funniness in our striving, to enjoy the ride. Cartoonists can portray the confrontations that Wangari Maathai's women lived on Freedom Corner with all their shock and jolt, but without their eye-to-eye, flesh-to-flesh reality. Cartoonists let us attend the confrontations, one step removed. In this sense, they invite us to play. In the cartoon, all we know about culture comes to bear on everything we should be as cultural participants, everything we aspire to be: a community with vision and ideals and obstacles, none of them so great that it cannot succumb to laughter.

Cartoonists draw for hope and play, each box a small step closer to shalom.

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Contemporary Chinese Communication Scholarship
An Emerging Alternative Paradigm

Wenshan Jia, Hailong Liu, Runze Wang, and Xinchuan Liu

The Historical Context for and Current Status of Communication Studies in China

While it has been commonly understood in the Western world today that only two scholarly traditions of communication research – the European tradition and the North American tradition – are recognized in the global field of communication studies, in this chapter we present an informed argument for the view that an alternative, yet complementary scholarly paradigm, the Chinese paradigm of communication research, has already emerged. This paradigm, built upon borrowings from the American and (to a lesser extent) the European traditions during the past three decades, is beginning to bear the fruit of originality and to enrich the global field of communication studies.

Since China began its economic reform and opening-up to the outside world in 1978, communication studies there, as an academic discipline imported from the modern West, has undergone a rocky 15-year period of leftist ideological screening and criticism. The discipline entered a period of prosperity in 1992, when China's reform leader Deng Xiaoping conducted an inspection in the south, calling for the establishment of free market economy in China. On the one hand, the field of journalism in China appropriated the discipline of communication studies and integrated it into journalism as a system of scientific discourse, in order to counteract attacks from the left and to legitimize itself as an academic discipline. On the other hand, China's emerging market economy demanded a scientific study of market

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needs and the use of theories and methods of communication in public relations and advertising. In the meantime, the Chinese media found themselves obligated to be loyal to both the Chinese Communist Party and the market for survival. The discipline was understandably raised to the status of a first-class academic subject by China's Ministry of Education in 1997 (Liu, 1999). As a result, the 1990s witnessed a significant expansion of education in journalism and communication in China. There were 88 departments and 124 schools of journalism communication in China from 1996 to 1999.

Entering the twenty-first century, China was even more determined to let itself communicate with the world and let the world communicate with it. The driving force for the next pivotal moment in China's media and communication reform and development was China's official entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on November 10, 2001. Today China hosts 982 schools and departments of journalism and communication in higher education (Wu, 2011) and has 14 PhD grant-supported programs and hundreds of MA programs in journalism and communication. In 2008 China enrolled about 160,000 undergraduate students, thousands of MA graduates, and about 200 PhD postgraduates in journalism or communication in higher education (Wu, 2010), but today it enrolls an estimated number of 200,000 undergraduate students. Another strong indicator of China's efforts toward original scholarship in communication is that a total of nine journalism or communication postdoctoral research stations have been established at various prestigious Chinese universities such as Fudan University (2003), Renmin University (2004), or Tsinghua University (2003) and eight other academic institutions such as China Academy for Social Sciences have been recipients of grants for postdoctoral research in journalism or communication (W. Li, 2011).

The third pivotal moment that fuels reform and development in journalism and communication is China's peaceful rise, which was illustrated by the successful hosting of the Olympic Games in 2008, by the World Expo in 2010, and by the country's recent ranking as the second largest economy in the world. The growth rate of China's media industry has remained higher than the general national GDP (gross domestic product) growth rate. Its total output in 2011 was 637.9 billion renminbi (RMB) (Cui & Hou, 2012). China has begun to develop media and cultural industry as a national innovation strategy. Therefore the Chinese government has begun to invest more and more in journalism and communication research. The National Social Science Foundation has been established by the Chinese government and managed by the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences. Funds allocated for journalism and communication research grew from 13 million RMB in 1991 to 234 million RMB in 2008 (Y. Li, 2010). The growth in research funding has significantly increased the productivity of journalism and communication research. So far, according to the database Zhongguo Zhiwang (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), there are 52 kinds of journals on journalism and communication, with a total output of 369,891 published research papers (http://www.cnki.net/). Fifteen of these journals have been classified as China social science citation index (CSSCI) journals from 2012 to 2013.

With its peaceful rise, China has become more self-confident. It has made up its mind to be proactive and seek global understanding and acceptance, and also to improve the global order of media and the global power structure (e.g., C. Li, 2011) – aside from the goal of reforming its society and politics through its own mechanisms, structures, and processes of global and domestic communication.

In the process of developing communication studies during the past three decades, particularly since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a group of prominent Chinese scholars of journalism communication have begun to reflect upon the history of this field and to evaluate its scholarship in order to chart a trajectory for future developments. Notable among such efforts are *Three Decades of Communication Studies in China* (Wang & Hu, 2010); *Most Recent Reports on Journalism Communication in China* (Tong, 2010 and 2011); and "Reflection and excess: A Retrospective on Chinese communication studies in the past decade" (Hu & Ji, 2011).

In this chapter, which is informed by all these and similar reflections on the field of Chinese communication studies, we offer an exemplary discussion and evaluation of the original scholarship carried in journalism communication (together with the scholarly debates around it) and published in Chinese journals and/or by Chinese academic presses on the territory of the People's Republic of China, most of it in Chinese. This body of scholarship warrants our special attention for several reasons. First, it illustrates the emergence of an alternative paradigm, complementary to the Western one, flowing out of a long-lasting and increasingly open civilization: the Chinese civilization, which has been undergoing a rebirth and exerting a global impact. To have a better understanding of it means to have a better understanding of a unique civilization, alternative and complementary to others. Second, a synthetic and critical presentation of these bodies of scholarship in English, with a view to informing the global scholarly field of journalism and communication, could help enrich the intellectual dialogue on communication theory and research. Our observation is that the field of communication studies, dominated as it is by Europe and the United States, is itself undergoing a crisis parallel to the economic one. The Euro-American model currently focuses on technologies of communication and seems to be stagnating in the area of theorizing, due to its reluctance and inability to take advantage of other, non-Western cultural resources in communication theory and research. Finally, it is hoped that this critical review might help chart the futures of journalism and communication by pointing to original theory and research in light of Chinese perspectives.

Given the fact that our focus is on original Chinese scholarship and meta-scholarship on journalism and communication in contemporary China, we do not discuss here scholarly publications in the West translated into Chinese or edited on the basis of materials originally published in languages other than Chinese, such as English. Nor do we discuss original scholarly publications on journalism or communication from a Chinese perspective, but published in English and outside of China. There are two reasons for this. First, such publications are easily accessible to mainstream scholars in the field, as most of them speak English. Second, several

publications synthesizing and evaluating the literature of Chinese journalism and communication have already been out there. For example, the first author himself has authored one chapter (Jia, 2000) and edited a scholarly volume on these topics (Jia, Lu, & Heisey, 2002); both are in English and have been published by an American press. Our present purpose, clearly defined, is to fill a gap in the English-language literature.

In what follows we will divide our topic into three parts. The first part gives a synthesis of current scholarship on Chinese journalism and communication and scholarly debates. The second part consists in a meta-theoretical evaluation of the literature. In the third part we make suggestions for the future development of the Chinese paradigm in journalism and communication theory and research.

Synthesis of Scholarship and Scholarly Debates

Synthesis of scholarship

It is true that the overall focus of communication studies in contemporary China has been either introducing to the West, by way of translations and editions, the existing publications in communication scholarship or using communication theory and methods appropriated from the West for practical purposes – such as to meet the needs of the emerging market, of the Chinese media under reform, or of the government, at various levels (these are needs related to local, national, international, or global image and discursive power). However, there has been an explosive expansion of consensus that, in order for China to effectively communicate with the world, in order for the world to effectively communicate with China, and in order for Chinese to communicate with themselves, a grand system of (meta-)theoretical discourse needs to be created (see, e.g., Hu & Ji, 2011; Huang, 2012; Liu, 2010; Wang & Hu, 2010; Yin, 2010). This system should be able to infuse an intimate understanding of the Chinese tradition, China's current status, and its domestic and global contexts of diversity and volatility. Consequently it should also be able to illuminate current practices and the future, which is central to the construction of a harmonious society and world. Scanning the field instead of skimming the surface, one can easily find an emerging group of scholars of communication in China who have produced an impressive array of original (meta-)theoretical works on communication, all grounded in Chinese contexts and embedded in a well-informed global outlook. Here we present an exemplary review of such scholarship. In what follows we will highlight four areas of original research in communication or related to it. These areas are: (1) research on the history of Chinese journalism in light of disciplinary perspectives on communication; (2) research on Chinese development communication; (3) research on critical discourse analysis; (4) (meta-)theoretical scholarship in the light of various Chinese perspectives.

Research on the history of Chinese journalism in the light of disciplinary perspectives on communication

The most fruitful area of journalism and communication research in China during the past several decades is without doubt the history of Chinese journalism. Given that Chinese culture is characterized by a deep sense of history, it is natural to find here greater emphasis on the historical approach to journalism than in the West, where journalism is predominantly viewed as a practical discipline concerned with the here and now. In China there is a strong belief, particularly in journalism, that history, like a mirror, would illuminate today and tomorrow. One indicator of this belief is the fact that, ever since 1989, the school of the history of Chinese journalism has been enjoying scholarly exchanges in the pages of the journal *Journalism Evolution*, which is the flagship of the Society for the History of Chinese Journalism (its current editor-in-chief is Runze Wang, one of the present authors). The most widely known result of this kind of work is the three-volume *A Complete History of Chinese Journalism*, edited by Hanqi Fang – a towering figure in the field (Fang, 1996, 1999). The book covers various topics such as ancient Chinese journalism during all the dynasties, the Western missionaries' journalism in China, journalism during the republican era, as well as the journalism of the communist revolution before and after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, up until 1991. In addition, these volumes also cover journalism in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao from 1949 to 1991. This body of original scholarship is of historical significance for several reasons. First, it has filled a gap in one area of Chinese historiography. Second, it has laid the foundation for journalism as a respected academic discipline in contemporary China. Third, it makes a significant contribution to research in journalism communication – especially in the general history of journalism communication.

However, this historical perspective and its related methods have almost run through their course. The introduction, into China, of the discipline of communication was eagerly defended and embraced: this new discipline was expected to rejuvenate and expand the scholarly inquiry into Chinese journalism and to legitimize and strengthen the related studies carried by far-sighted scholars during the past several decades. Chinese journalism research has appropriated new theoretical and methodological approaches to communication – for example positivism, ethnography, and hermeneutics. This strategy has yielded some positive results. First, a program of research on the history of journalism and communications technology – for instance on the interaction between communication technologies, institutions, and journalism during the early republican era (see, e.g., Wang, 2007) – has begun. Research on the use of the telegraph and on its role – both in journalism and communication and in culture and society, in China, during the Qing dynasty – offers a sophisticated analysis of the relationship between communication technologies and the social–cultural transformation (see, e.g., Sun, 2007; Ma & Yan, 2012). Such studies, adopting multidisciplinary perspectives and hermeneutic methods, have already replaced the traditional method of chronicling defining moments in Chinese journalism. Second, research on the history of

journalistic practices – such as newspaper management and publishing, or advertising in modern China – has also started. The results of research on the impact of traditional Chinese culture on newspaper management are also very interesting (Wang, 2007). Third, inspired and influenced by communication theory, Chinese historians of journalism have begun to explore the evolving meanings and values of indigenous concepts of communication. For example, 新闻 (*xinwen*, "news"; see M. Li, 2009) is found to have five meanings in ancient Chinese history – common sightings, past sightings, opinions, dissensions, and the seen – which impacted the current meanings and functions of news in China. These meanings seem to suggest the relativity, subjectivity, and oppositionality of news long before the birth of modern journalism in the West. Another example: 宣传 (*xuanchuan*, "propaganda"; see Liu, 2011a, 2011b, 2012) is found to have been used, in translations, by Western Christian missionaries in China; later it was used in Japan. When Chinese students reintroduced the concept back to China from Japan, the meaning of propaganda had changed – it had acquired revolutionary connotations in place of the Christian ones. Since then it had been a positive concept – up until recently, when the Chinese government became aware of its negative character in the Western world and tried to use terms such as "publicity" as an English translation instead of "propaganda." Another study worthy of highlighting is that of the concept of 公 (*gong*, "public") (Jiang, 2011): a Chinese–Western comparative perspective reveals subtle differences between the Chinese concept of *gong* and the Western concept of "public" in various dimensions such as denotation, connotation, morality, and culture. It is discovered that, while public discourse in the West serves to legitimate private interest, which is the foundation of public interest and the public good, the modern Chinese journalistic discourse champions the public good in opposition to the private interest. Terms such as 采访 (*caifang*, "interviewing") (Deng, 2009) or 记者 (*jizher*, "news reporter") (Deng, 2008) have also been studied in their indigenous Chinese contexts. Finally, several other published works contain original conceptual and theoretical explorations of indigenous Chinese journalism and communication (Sun, 1997a, 1997b; B. Li, 2009; Xie, 2006).

Research on Chinese development communication

Since the 1980s, when the study of communication was introduced in China, development communication has been one of its important parts. Original research started after the introduction and absorption of knowledge in this area by Chinese scholars. As the leading communication journals of the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) indicates, several lines of research have been identified as follows.

Early studies consist of original works such as Jianhua Zhu's analysis of the rural communication network in Shanghai (Zhu, 1984) or Dahong Min and Chongshan Chen's studies of media behavior and of urban and rural audience in Zhejiang Province (Min & Chen, 1991). Zhengyi Qiu wrote his doctoral dissertation on mass communication and rural development in China in 1993 (see Qiu, 1993). Chongshan Chen and Wusan Sun wrote a book entitled *People, Media and Modernization*

(Chen & Sun, 1997). Not all these early studies were under the same theoretical framework of communication and modernization. However, since the 2000s, Chinese development communication research has yielded more and more new results, especially Guoliang Zhang's programmatic research from 2002 to 2009 (Zhang, 2009). Zhang's research took about six and half years and covered eight eastern, central, and western provinces, with a total population of about 450 million people, and a sample of 3,000 homes with more than 10,000 individual subjects. In addition, his research has also done the content analysis of 32 kinds of newspapers, two weeklies, and 25,000 news items. The goal was to find out how the Chinese audience used the newspapers, broadcasts, the TV, the Internet and so on. Zhang also studied how the Chinese audience processed information from mass communication and how the Chinese audience understood ideas of modernization. There are six main findings in Zhang's research. First, mediated society is a developing trend in both urban and rural areas in contemporary China. Second, mediated society is mainly employed as a venue for mass leisure. Third, mediated society has created the "TV > Newspapers > Broadcasting > Network" media contact model for the audience in China's urban and rural areas. Fourth, it has shaped news-driven preferences of the audience in the society. Fifth, Chinese media need to have social responsibilities. Sixth, it is suggested that we should neither rely excessively on the media nor ignore them. This program of research has significantly advanced the literature on Chinese development communication. Simultaneously, other communication scholars have studied Chinese development communication from the angles of media effects, media and social change, health communication, media literacy, and so on. For instance, Jin, Tan, and Xiong (2005) conducted a study from the angle of media effect entitled "A study of the relationship between media use and life quality." Jianbin Guo's study *Television in Dulongjiang* (Guo, 2005) is about media and social change. Health communication as part of Chinese development communication focuses on the relationship between health and social development. For instance, Li and Zhou conducted research on AIDS and media (Li & Zhou, 2005) and on tobacco control reporting (Li & Zhou, 2008). Media literacy is playing a more and more important role in Chinese development communication. Wei Bu studied the relationship between media and children (Wei, 2001, 2006), while Baohua Zhou and Ye Lu studied many phenomena between use of and participation in the media (Zhou & Ye, 2008).

Research on critical discourse analysis

The cultural discourse analysis method, appropriated from the European tradition, has found a home in China in recent years and has engendered some interesting research findings (e.g., Shi-xu, 2010; Wu, 2012; Wu & Hu, 2010; Wu & Jiang, 2009). First of all, all this body of literature is both a critique of the Western tradition and a creative articulation and application of a new theoretical discourse sensitive to the Chinese experiences. Wu and his associates offer a Foucauldian critique of the modern concept of discourse as logo-centric and superficial. Furthermore, they recover the traditional model of discourse embedded in ancient

Chinese classics, in which discourse is the integration of speech and silence as well as the integration of speech and action that requires situated understanding. Finally, they rearticulate a set of strategies for conducting cultural anthropology in light of indigenous cultural discourses such as that of Confucianism, and they recover the traditional Chinese discourse of heritage, which gives new meanings and new life to "mundane" historical–cultural sites, which have been ignored as a result of the Western discourse of heritage. Using neo-Marxist approaches, Shi-xu first critiques the hegemonic discourse of the modern Western discourse analysis tradition. Then he lays out a meta-theoretical model for studying contemporary Chinese discourse. This model, according to him, must be locally grounded, globally minded, and interculturally dialogic. Its theoretical structure consists of Chinese concepts such as "the integration of heaven and humanity," "the thinking style of the dialectic view of unity," and the linguistic idea of "speech's inability to exhaust meaning." Its value system consists of patriotism, respect for authority, and attention to aesthetics. Its methodology consists of holism, dialectical unity, the integration of rationality and experience; it also integrates local values, universal values, and a cyclical dialogue between discourse and life. Its problematic is defined by pragmatism and the attempt to improve the conditions of humanity, and it embraces a variety of topics such as development discourse, discourse on sovereignty, crisis discourse, discourse on cultural integration, intercultural discourse, and so on. The author has conducted several discourse studies such as the one on urban development in the city of Hangzhou, which he presents in the second part of the book; and this case study generates some very interesting and useful findings and suggestions. Shi-xu has founded a research center – the Contemporary Chinese Discourse Research Center – and a Chinese-language journal – the *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Discourse Research* – dedicated to the establishment of a Chinese paradigm in discourse studies (see http://www.discourses.org.cn/hyyj.asp for details).

Chinese (meta-)theoretical scholarship

The books of (meta-)theoretical explorations sampled here are Chen, 2008, Z. Li, 2010, F. Jiang, 2011, and Gao, 2012. The textbook is Guo, 2011.

Given the fact that the official ideology of the People's Republic of China is Marxism, Lidan Chen, a renowned Chinese scholar of journalism and communication theory, discovered and assembled a Marxist system of thinking on journalism and communication on the basis of his 10-year critical reading of Marx's and Engels' complete works translated into Chinese (50 volumes in all). The theory involved in this system is found to be strikingly consistent with Marxist materialism; it reveals the limitations of Western theories of communication, confined as they are to mentalism and cognitivism. In China this view is widely recognized as an original theoretical contribution to research in Marxism and a shining example of localizing Marxism. Related to Chen's monograph is Qingguang Guo's popular textbook *Introduction to Communication Studies* (Guo, 2011). Having infused into the subject perspectives as varied as those of Marxism, Western liberal theories, and Japanese views of communication, the textbook maintains a healthy balance of

the pluralistic kind, albeit not without shortcomings such as the virtual absence of indigenous Chinese concepts, theories, and perspectives of communication published in English in the past couple of decades in the US and elsewhere.

Fei Jiang (2011), unsatisfied with the current status of intercultural communication research in the West and in China, foregrounds communication and new media in his conceptualization of the relationship between communication and culture. He hypothesizes that the new media, unlike the traditional media, which have constructed the global myth of the American dream, are restructuring the power relations among global cultures. While these media are deconstructing the American myth, they are empowering China on an unprecedented scale (given that the Chinese netizen population is three times as large as that of the US) and constructing a new myth: the myth of the Chinese dream attracting global attention and emulation.

Furthermore, with China deeply drawn into globalization process, young and highly globally minded Chinese scholars of communication (particularly international communication) such as Zhi Li have found international/intercultural communication inadequate in explaining the dynamics of the world. Thus Li has written the first book in Chinese to systematically introduce global communication as an emerging branch of communication studies (Z. Li, 2010). This is one through a creative engrafting of Western literature (about 60 percent) onto Chinese literature (40 percent). Li presents the Chinese experience of globalization-cum-global communication and the Chinese observations of globalization-cum-global communication. This book has significantly advanced the literature on global communication in general. The author boldly states:

> Fundamentally speaking, globalization is globalization of communication. Therefore, in the era of globalization, global communication is on the verge of becoming the core of the discourse of communication studies. It is totally predictable that global communication will become another hot subject after international communication. (Z. Li, 2010, p. 13)

Ping Gao (2012), critical of the Ministry of Education's designation of journalism, advertising, and communication as separate disciplines, but also unhappy with the current Chinese practice of journalism as if it were advertising and of communication as if it were journalism, proposes to restructure communication studies and to make it the theoretical foundation for both journalism and advertising. She further argues that communication studies should center on humanistic concerns instead of objectivity; journalism should center on uncovering facts and truths instead of entertainment; advertising should center on credibility instead of hoaxing.

Synthesis of scholarly debates

While many scholarly topics have been debated in the contemporary field of Chinese communication studies – for instance the issue of translating key concepts of communication – the issue of the indigenization of communication research seems to have drawn the most scholarly attention and thus will be our focus in this section of the chapter.

The concepts and theories of communication have been introduced to China from the West, primarily since the late 1970s. As a discipline, communication has been in a strained relationship with indigenous ideas and practices. Resisting interference into Chinese thought and politics from the USSR, Mao Zedong called for the integration of Marxism into Chinese practice as early as the 1930s, during the Yan'an period (1935–1947), when he and the members of his Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and army were in exile. This policy of Mao's impacted all of the social science research in China. Later, during the 1980s, some early Chinese introducers of the discipline proposed a formal stance toward "the Western communication studies," which consists of "systematic understanding, analysis and research, critical absorption, and autonomous innovations" (Wang, 2007, p. 4).

During the 1990s, as communication research in China began to re-emerge after the attacks during the June 4, 1989 incident, the issue of localizing communication research was raised again, this time primarily by some seasoned scholars of communication of Chinese descent from the US, Hong Kong, and Taiwan – such as Yelu Yu (1982, 1985). As early as 1983, while accompanying Wilbur Schramm on his communication lecture tour in China, Yu raised a series of issues on tapping the intellectual resources of communication in ancient China. However, his call remained unheeded until the 1990s. During the 1990s scholars of communication in China began to shift their attention to ideas about communication embedded in ancient Chinese classics, in the hope of complementing and enriching the field of communication theory, which was dominated by the West. For example, *Chinese Communication Thoughts* (*Huaxia chuanbolun*) stated: "The purpose of sinicizing communication research by examining the past and the present of Chinese communication is to contribute to the development and enrichment of communication studies, so that it will not stay as a mere Western communication studies" (Sun, 1997a, p. 4).

It remains unclear if the findings of such a study would apply to contemporary China and to other, non-Chinese cultures. Ironically, this approach fails to localize Western theory; on the contrary, it puts the traditional Chinese experience into the theoretical frameworks of the West, so it ends up acknowledging the universality of Western theories. The study stirred one of the very few scholarly debates in the field of communication studies in China (W. Zhang, 2010). One oppositional voice claimed that localization is a meaningless concept. For example, Xiang Xiao (pen name of Yihong Wang) (Xiao, 1995) is of the view that it would be empty talk to argue for localization when there is lack of scholarly accumulation and preparation. The condition for localization should be, first and foremost, to have enough scholarly achievements and competence to dialogue with the West. She further argues that China and the West should not be set in opposition to each other and that, while localization may be recommended, globalization should be proposed as well. Lidan Chen cautions against localization by stating:

> A discipline is a discipline. If scholars are determined to make it a discipline of a given nation, it would very difficult to make it a real discipline … We do not have Chinese

> physics or Chinese chemistry. Why must we create a Chinese communication studies? Humanities and social sciences share the same universal principles as natural sciences. (Chen, 2002, p. 53)

Bing Li is one of the very few early scholars of communication who saw the contradictions in the concept of "localization." On one hand, he affirmed "the conscious, deep and rational nationalism embedded in the concept of localization"; on the other hand, he pointed to "a vicious cycle in which one is determined to seek knowledge and pursue truth while having to follow the Westerners' principles, embracing their thinking patterns, and even adopting their professional jargons" (B. Li, 1995, p. 6). Another ramification of the movement of localization in the 1990s followed the Hong Kong/Taiwan model. It tested hypotheses empirically derived in the West, particularly in the US. For example, Guoliang Zhang and his team tested the agenda setting theory, the cognitive dissonance theory, the cultivation theory, and the third-person effect theory in Chinese contexts, only to reach different conclusions (Ding, 2003; Long, 2005; W. Yu, 2007; Zhang & Li, 2001; Zhang & Li, 2003). Some scholars opined that this was the lowest level of localization in research, as it ignored the gap between Western theory and the Chinese contexts. Z. Li (1996) argued that this kind of research is excessively dependent on the West; it merely "processes the imported materials" instead of "export[ing] the local products"; it consumes the theories of the "center" without making any innovation. Yiqing Hu (2011) argues that both the application of Western theory to traditional Chinese culture and its testing in Chinese contexts reflect a dualistic pattern of thinking. They result in an unscholarly and dogmatic reading of both Western theory and Chinese culture. Localization in communication research must demonstrate scholarly awareness of pluralism. Its value lies in giving Chinese scholars an adequate level of caution and a kind of critical stance toward the tension between the exported theory and the Chinese experience.

The issue of localization in communication has resurfaced at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, in conjunction with China's economic and political ascension. However, the context in which it resurfaced had undergone drastic changes. First, the period of introducing Western communication studies to China is over: after numerous translations and international exchanges, China's map of knowledge in communication studies is almost complete. Even though there are details still to be mastered, not many Western theories of communication remain unknown to a typical Chinese scholar. Communication research in the West seems to have been stuck in the bottleneck. Some Chinese scholars even lament the disappearance of communication theory. This means that, after the cultural revolution, these scholars have finished taking lessons in communication studies that were already made up for them. The second change is the rise of nationalism. With China's economic and political rise, the anxiety and desire for Nobel prizes and for Masters in science and scholarship among Chinese academics rose as well. The field of Chinese communication studies was no exception. Even though Chinese communication studies has already made big strides during the past three decades, the status of the field is still

not compatible with the current international status of China as an economy and nation. This time the outcry for localization has already surpassed the conservative framework of mending the Western theory, proposed by Chinese communications scholars living abroad as the second stage of localization. It calls for debunking the scholarly discourse of the West, which is still hegemonic, and it means to achieve an academic status compatible with the economic and political status of the nation.

As Chinese scholars who settled abroad have been exposed to Western communication studies earlier and for a longer period than their colleagues living in China, they learned a few lessons about localization – lessons drawn from excessive reliance on the Social Sciences Citation Index as the benchmark for quality scholarship (Chen & Qian, 2004). They are aware that the concepts of "theory" and "research" in the discourse of localization have different meanings in Eastern and in Western cultures. In the Chinese cultural tradition there is a lack of social scientific approaches to theory construction and a lack of analytical thinking in natural science. Furthermore, this tradition emphasizes instrumental rationality for practical purposes; in this it clearly differs from the ancient Greek tradition, which sought for the truth. Therefore to construct a Chinese communication theory does not mean to construct something in opposition to the Western one. It means abiding by the universal criteria on which Western theory is constructed, as well as heeding and integrating Chinese perspectives. This would result in a theory that could be more valid and reliable by way of "embedding itself in hegemony and … ris[ing] out of hegemony" (Lee, 2003, p. 77). One of the proposals was to process the theoretical embryo out of the Chinese cultural tradition, test it with modern social scientific methods, and formulate a universal theory (Wang, Sheng, & Luo, 2001). The opposite proposal was to select from the system of knowledge existing in the West the concepts, problems, and theoretical frameworks that were fitting and proper for the Chinese context and had adequate explanatory power in Chinese situations (Zhu, 2001). In what follows we will make some observations and offer some suggestions regarding the issue of localization.

An Evaluation

On the basis of the kinds of original scholarship sampled above, we conclude that China is embarking on the road to producing original scholarship on journalism and communication. A new, alternative and yet complementary paradigm of communication studies – the Chinese communication studies – is up and coming, despite the hurdles delineated by fellow communication scholars below.

Here are a few arguments in support of our assessment and evaluation of communication studies in Chinese published in recent years in Chinese journals of journalism and communication. Other reviewers seem to offer an overall sense of negativity, yet little evidence to support their conclusions.

While it is recognized that communication studies in China is booming in terms of scale of institutionalization and professionalization and pluralistic topics, its

indigenization process is being mainstreamed or Americanized (in the positivist sense), going through the process of de-politicization with a focus on the quest for the "objective" truth and the obsession with technological determinism (Hu & Ji, 2011). As a result, communication studies is losing its theoretical grounding in Chinese traditional and modern intellectual resources, and thus its power to guide and reflect upon its own development in China. The only means for a breakthrough is to develop original theories of communication rooted in contemporary Chinese praxis, so as to help contribute to social ideals such as equality, justice, and harmony. Yungong Yin (2010) deplores the largely poor quality of communication scholarship in China (translations, introductions, and reviews) and calls for original scholarship, a deep level of indigenization of communication research, and the birth of a Chinese paradigm of communication studies.

"Though no empirically or case-based theory of communication with a broad recognition has ever arisen out of the Chinese experience" (Wang, Hu, Zhang, & Yang, 2010, p. 11), "communication studies has finally taken root in China as a branch of social science disciplines after 30 years' development which consists of introduction, transplanting, modeling, transformation and learning" (Wang, 2010, p. 1). As early as 1987, Jianjun Yan (1987) called for the establishment of the Chinese paradigm of communication (*goutong xue*), a two-way harmony-oriented communication; this would help the budding field of communication studies in China break out of the confines of the Euro-American conception of communication (*chuanbo*), a one-way communication seeking domination and control. Echoing Yan and Yin (from North China), Xinming Huang (from South China) called for hammering the Chinese system of theoretical discourse on journalism communication (Huang, 2012).

We understand that, in comparison to its development overseas, Chinese communication scholarship in China itself is a little behind. Over the past three decades, Chinese communication scholarship published in the US, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, especially within the rhetorical, interpersonal, intercultural, and organizational tradition, has been consistently dialoguing with, and contesting, the America/Europe-dominated traditions in light of Chinese perspectives. As evidenced by Jia (2000) and by Jia and colleagues (2002), this body of scholarship, critical of the Euro-American biases and informed by a relativist perspective, has been recognizably original and has significantly enriched understanding of human communication.

We also understand that other social sciences such as sociology, psychology (especially social psychology), and anthropology have been introduced to China much earlier than communication studies and in consequence have been indigenized much earlier and have generated much more original research. For example, the well-known sociological theory concerning the distinctive structure of Chinese society – *chaxu geju* ("differential mode of association") – was advanced by the eminent sociologist Xiaotong Fei as early as 1947, on the basis of his intensive fieldwork in China (Fei, 1992). In a nutshell, *chaxu geju* means that one's relationships with others develop concentrically, in ripples that correspond to

different degrees of proximity or closeness; and these ripples or circles depend on one's power, social status, and the nature of his/her blood ties. Social psychology began its localization process and started to acquire a distinctively Chinese character in the early 1970s (see, e.g., Li & Yang, 1972). The secret to all successes of this kind is to ground the study deeply in Chinese contexts. The lack of a sizable amount of original scholarship in communication studies in China is most probably due to the fact that most researchers have not grounded their research in Chinese contexts – or at least not enough.

However, this conclusion does not annul the fact that in recent years the fields of Chinese journalism and communication has indeed produced a significant (albeit inadequate) amount of original scholarship, especially in comparison with its own past – as evidenced in the four areas of scholarship we have reviewed above. We argue that the assessments and evaluations conducted by fellow Chinese scholars of communication remain unaware of the existence of original journalism and communication scholarship produced on Chinese soil. There is lack of evidence – such as specific data or a relevant body of literature – to support their claims about the current status of Chinese communication research.

While all of these four areas of research are influenced by Western communication scholarship, the studies they produced have undergone varying degrees of localization and operate at various levels of theory. The research undertaken in Chinese development communication has tested theories created in the West, but its findings reflect most closely the Chinese reality and have theoretical implications for the construction of a Chinese model in the field; for example, the notion of Chinese media's responsibility is consistent with the Confucian emphasis on moral self-discipline and moral self-cultivation. The new scholarship on the history of Chinese journalism concentrates on redefining concepts fundamental to communication – including the concepts of news, or the concept of communication itself – in a Chinese context. This body of scholarship is helping lay the conceptual and theoretical foundation of a Chinese paradigm of communication. Chinese critical discourse analysis not only deconstructs the biases of Western theory and method, but also executes a creative application of the transformed theory and method to Chinese contexts. More significantly still, it has created a system of Chinese-style theoretical and methodological discourse, as exemplified by Shi-xu (2010). Last but not least, as indicated by the (meta-)theoretical scholarship, pure theorizing about communication in today's China is situated in the dynamic and volatile contexts of synergistic interactions among the past, the present, and the future, as exemplified by Fei Jiang (2011). In a word, the four approaches we have outlined complement each other very well and illustrate a complete scene of tools available for theory building.

However, given the overall volume of scholarship on journalism and communication produced in China, the original scholarship generated by these approaches at various levels of theorizing has not reached critical mass yet. In addition, there is still lack of systematically regulated and hosted contests and healthy competition among approaches to theory and research.

In conclusion, the synergy between quantitative approaches used by researchers in Chinese development communication who aim to test existing Western theories; the interpretive method of the new scholarship on the history of Chinese journalism, which places fundamental concepts of communication in Chinese historical–cultural–social contexts; the deconstructionist–reconstructionist method used in Chinese critical discourse analysis; and the (meta-)theoretical approaches – all these elements seem to paint a clear prospect for the establishment of a new, more inclusive, and more universal paradigm of communication theory, above and beyond the American positivist and European critical paradigms. This is expected to happen all the more as the emerging paradigm is being constructed from the creative synergies between the East and the West; it integrates both the experience of the West and that of the East, takes advantage of their combined resources, pays heed to the American and the European tradition in communication studies as well as to those of other cultures. Given the synergistic, inclusive, integrationist, and original characteristics of the Chinese paradigm in journalism communication, we are confident that this paradigm will eventually become more expansive and complex, more valid and reliable, and thus more universalistic than its predecessors. In this way it will belong not only to China but, more importantly, to the world and to the future of humanity, in a global village hungry for peace and harmony.

Suggestions for Future Developments

On the basis of this account and evaluation, we offer two clusters of suggestions for the future development of communication research in China. The first cluster offers a set of grand visions and strategies for future theory and research in Chinese communication. The second cluster offers advice specifically on how to advance indigenization in theory and research in Chinese journalism and communication.

Grand visions and strategies

Clarification of terms

Some fundamental concepts of communication studies should be clearly defined in order to lay a solid foundation for the establishment of a Chinese paradigm in communication studies. Though a few studies of this kind have been undertaken (such as the ones discussed in the section on the history of Chinese journalism), focus on this problem has not been a serious item on the research agenda in the field of Chinese communication studies. For example, what does the term *xinwenchuanbo* exactly mean? Does it mean journalistic communication, journalism in communication, or journalism and communication? The question is raised, and it is argued (see, e.g., Xiong, 2012) that, in the field, *xinwenchuanbo* seems to have been structured as "journalistic communication," which is too narrow; it should be restructured as "journalism and communication," so that the field may become broader, more resourceful, and more open-ended. Another term is "communication" which has been rendered through *chuanbo* or *jiaoji* – or, to a smaller extent,

goutong. In retrospect, is *chuanbo*, which implies that communication is one way, a wrong term? What is the relationship among these words? How is *goutong*, a native Chinese term, similar to or different from "communication"? Are there other indigenous words that could be communication-friendly? Clear answers to such queries could help conceptualize and structure not only the field, but also theory and research. However, there have been no definitive answers. We suggest that systematic, programmatic research be conducted to deconstruct and reconstruct the meanings and functions of such concepts both in Western and in Chinese contexts, as well as the relations between them as expressed in translations.

Above and beyond the East–West

Like most other disciplines in social sciences and humanities in modern and contemporary China, the field of communication studies seems to be preoccupied with the East–West dichotomy as if these were the only cultural types in existence on the globe. Should we strive only for an integration of the East and the West, or of China and the West, or should we aim for the integration of all cultures into our theory and research? Our answer is that the truly global and universalistic system of theoretical discourse can be created only when the valuable resources of all the existing cultures are fully taken into account, fully tapped into, and fully integrated. Therefore we strongly advise that Chinese scholars of communication theory examine seriously not only the East–West dynamics, but also China's relationships with all the ethnic cultures within China and around the world.

Toward the creation of a Chiglocal communication model

In order to accomplish what has been said above, we suggest that a new meta-theoretical and meta-methodological paradigm of communication be created: the Chiglocal communication model, related to the concept of Chiglobalization (Jia, 2009). This model has the following layers of meaning.

First, "Chi-" stands for "Chinese" and as an extension Chinese culture, Chinese perspectives, or Chinese experiences – which are the fundamental resource and fountain of Chinese communication research. Second, the term reflects the global dimension of Chinese communication. This dimension involves a two-way process. On the one hand, there are universal aspects of Chinese culture and communication that contribute to communication theory and need to be globalized or shared with the rest of humanity. On the other hand, there are universal aspects of all the other cultures within China and around the world that are integrated into the dynamic and outward-looking Chinese culture and communication system. Third, the concept of Chiglocalization also renders or incorporates the local dimension of Chinese communication. This dimension, in turn, involves another two-way process – one of localization. On the one hand, communication theories and approaches from other cultural traditions, such as American or European, that are introduced to China are expected to undergo some kind of sinicization process. On the other hand, indigenous Chinese communication theories and approaches introduced to other cultures are expected to undergo a localization process as well. In a word, the

Chiglocal communication model is both interactive and open-ended, both homogenizing and hybridizing, both volatile and harmonizing. With this model we hope to create and sustain a global village of dynamic and evolving diversity.

Toward the creation of a unique research culture of healthy competition

Strategically, Chinese scholars of communication are advised to go beyond launching some sparkling theoretical ideas; we expect them systematically and programmatically to create theories or theoretical models on the basis of intercultural integration and then to test them. They should also create different theoretical camps and debate their ideas openly with each other across these camps. Specifically, schools and departments, research centers and associations of communication studies in China are strongly advised to resist the tendency to follow the crowd. They should capitalize on their uniqueness and cultivate their own positions – in theory, in research, and in education.

Strategies for localization in theory and research

These proposals raise the following meta-theoretical questions behind localization: Do the social scientific methods, which originated in the West, fit the Chinese experience? Who/what should determine the criteria for evaluating the quality of the scholarship of communication in China: Western academic circles or Chinese communication practitioners? While debates on such questions are still ongoing, we make the following observations and suggestions:

1 Differentiate between social sciences and natural sciences. The ontological assumptions held in natural sciences should not be mechanically extended to social sciences. One should be warned against a mechanistic use and transfer to China of assumptions and hypotheses with an imprint of Western culture.
2 Get rid of nationalistic sentimentality and treat scholarly norms rationally. There is more than one methodological perspective. Besides positivism, we could also use the interpretive and the critical methods. Use of pluralistic research methods would enable us to undermine the dominance of quantitative methods and would allow us to reflect upon the relationship between knowledge and power.
3 Differentiate between method and methodology. While methods are about research procedures and norms, methodologies are theories about methods. There are unspoken assumptions under each and every theory. If a theory is applied to a foreign context without prior critique and testing, it may not work. This is true in the West as well as in China. This seems to be a cross-cultural problem, when in fact it is a methodological one. Because of this problem, some radical advocates of localization question the scientific nature of the methods of social sciences and argue for creating brand new methods. This is an instance of treating methods and methodologies as one and the same thing. While the pursuit of social science innovations is praiseworthy, the sheer denial of the validity and reliability of the methods already in use in social sciences is uncalled for.

4 Differentiate between cultural tradition and traditional culture. Social sciences should focus on the cultural tradition that is still impacting today's society. They are not advised to clip the traditional culture using modern terminologies, to clip the existing reality using concepts of the traditional culture, or to even create an independent system of (meta-)theoretical discourse.
5 Be heedful of narrow-minded nationalism and sluggishness in thinking. Globalization makes pure and autonomous cultures disappear. Chinese reality has both global and local dimensions. If China and the West are conceptualized as totalistic entities and are juxtaposed into oppositions, this would result in rejecting the foreign experience and perspectives, which runs against the original intention to pursue diversity in the localization discourse.

There are reasonable elements in the localization discourse. Once its ideological element is removed, the greatest concern is what the next step should be after the introduction of the discipline of communication studies into China. While in words we could deny the localization discourse, in practice we could not avoid taking a road to action. There are many different roads to localization. Tensions such as between application and theory, or particularity and universality, which exist in communication theory and research in China, not only reflect the current Chinese situation focusing on development, but also mirror the tensions between globalism and pluralism, or nationalism and internal ethnic diversity, which are heightening contemporary China's anxiety.

The nature of localization in communication research in China is defined by two pairs of contradictory terms: practical orientation versus theoretical orientation; and particularity in theory and universality in theory. However, this does not mean that one has to make an either/or choice. Researchers are expected to reflect on their own research and identify its goals and values along these two dimensions simultaneously. Along this line of thinking, the two antinomic pairs can be translated into four types of localization orientation, and each type is placed inside one of the four quadrants of a two-dimensional coordinate system (Liu, 2011b). These four types (see Figure 40.1) are merely ideal in the Weberian sense; in real life there are always mixed types.

In the upper left quadrant is the practical research orientation, which is the current focus of Chinese communication studies. It has two emphases. The first one is on research on communication skills, strategies, and policies, on topics such as communication and national image construction, or communication and public diplomacy. The second emphasis is on research on the history of Chinese communication practices and thought. Its findings provide the theoretical resources for the research orientation in the upper right quadrant. On the lower left quadrant is the research area being attempted for opening-up. The US, having made significant achievements in practical communication research, has set up a gold standard and provided a reference point. We are confident that a Chinese model of communication practices with global implications will eventually be born, given China's unique history, culture, and development.

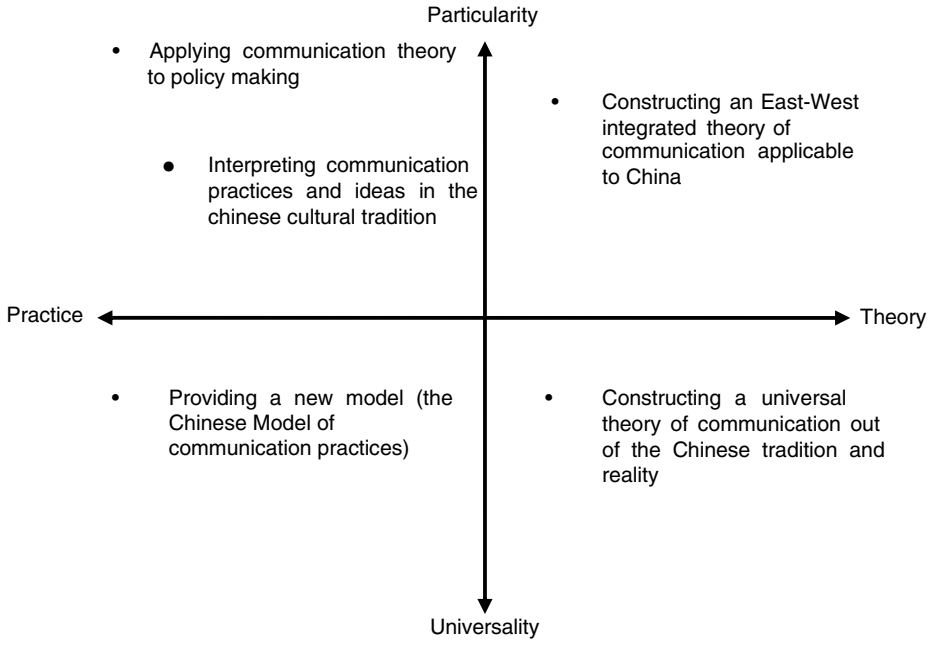
Particularity
Applying communication theory to policy making
Constructing an East-West integrated theory of communication applicable to China
Interpreting communication practices and ideas in the chinese cultural tradition
Practice
Theory
Providing a new model (the Chinese Model of communication practices)
Constructing a universal theory of communication out of the Chinese tradition and reality
Universality

Figure 40.1 Four localization orientations in communication research in China. Source: Liu, 2011b, p. 47.

Both the research orientation in the upper right quadrant and the research orientation in the lower right quadrant treat theory construction as their highest scholarly goal. The only difference is that the former emphasizes a theory capable of interpreting China, whereas the latter focuses on the construction of a universal theory of communication out of China's uniqueness. If the latter were applied to the former, the former would be much richer in content than the latter. While the theory in the upper right quadrant includes the theory in the lower right quadrant, the theory in the lower right quadrant is the result of processing and generalization of the theory in the upper right quadrant. The two are complementary rather than contradictory.

All these four research foci are of value in the current Chinese context. However, most of the research has concentrated on the practical focus, especially in the past two or three decades. It is only in recent years that a shift to the three research foci is slowly beginning to take place. These research foci have been the main subject of the present chapter, whose purpose is also to support the theoretical orientation in communications studies in China. Instead of joining the chorus of those who deplore the lack of original research in this discipline, we offer an informed argument for the view that original studies of communication with significant theoretical implications are rapidly emerging on a large scale. We anticipate that the period when "a hundred flowers will bloom" in China (to use Mao Zedong's slogan of 1957) will come in five to ten years from now.

Unlike the theoretical debate outlined above, debates on methodology within Chinese communication research circles seem to be few and far

between; moreover, they tend to get involved in the meta-theoretical discussion of localization. Although as many as 7.4 percent of China's scholarly publications on journalism and communication between 1978 and 2008 are found to be on research methods and scholarly norms (Shao & Liao, 2009), Chinese scholars of communication are not as deadlocked in the quantitative–qualitative divide as their counterparts in the West: the rise of pragmatism in the field is bridging this methodological gap. It is suggested that the scientific spirit should be upheld regardless of the method adopted (Zhang & Ren, 2011). For example, Lidan Chen (2011) argues for a deeper level of integration of the thinking patterns embedded both in the humanistic–historical–philosophical methods and in the scientific methods adopted in journalism and communication studies – an integration that goes beyond the mere adoption of two types of method. This is consistent with China's inclusive and integrationist approach to managing the relationship between its own culture and the cultures of others – particularly of the West.

Conclusion

Although by comparison with the American and European traditions Chinese communications theory and research are lagging behind somewhat, development is on its way. Moreover, the discipline has the potential to surpass its Euro-American counterparts and to become truly global and universalistic, if it localizes its theoretical and research traditions and takes full advantage of the valuable resources of other cultures – both at home and abroad.

Politically, China is one of the five members on the UN Security Council. Economically, it is ranked number two in the world. China is also ranked number 3 in outer space development and in quantity of nuclear weapons. It is the largest Internet and telecommunications country in the world. For the creation of a communicative China and a communicative world, for a more peaceful and harmonious global village, China should strive to become one of the major sources of communication theory and research in the world and should create one of the world's largest and most effective global communications and media networks and cultural industries. A long way to go for Chinese scholars of communication and research.

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Al Jazeera and Dr. Laura
Is a Global Islamic Reformist Media Ethics Theory Possible?

Haydar Badawi Sadig

This chapter contends that just as Western – especially utilitarian – media theories have been used to analyze global media content, an Islamic reformist perspective can be used to do the same, including in the northern hemisphere. The approach to this proposal is twofold. One part explains how Al Jazeera (the Arab television network, broadcasting from Doha, Qatar) introduced a journalism grounded in the ethics of Islamic reform and compatible with universal values. The second is to provide an example, taken from the present author's work, of formulating an Islamic reformist media ethics theory. The example used here is *The Dr. Laura Program* – a radio talk show in the United States that was second in ratings only to *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, the highest rated show of its kind.

Al Jazeera challenged the utilitarian, biased, and often arrogant Western paradigm of news gathering and reporting. It paved the way for a new paradigm of reporting world news and of commentary on them – a paradigm with a vast global reach, unprecedented by any news organization from the Third World. Without risking oversimplification, one would say that Al Jazeera is changing the way international organizations report and comment on global news, especially news about the Middle East and the Muslim world.

Laura Schlessinger, a conservative US radio talk show host, ranted the N-word to an African American caller 11 times in five minutes in her very popular show. A brief rendering and analysis of the case in light of an Islamic reformist ethics theory will be provided. The discussion of this case through an Islamic perspective will hopefully open up new horizons for a reversal in the flow of theorizing on global media ethics – one that should reproduce and emulate the reversal of

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flow in news reporting led by Al Jazeera: the flow should go from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere and have a non-Western yet genuinely global perspective.

The chapter will first present a review, painting a broad picture of the debates between Western utilitarian and communitarian media ethics theories. Then it will provide an account of Islamic reformist theory, which will be followed by an application of the theory to the cases of Al Jazeera and *The Dr. Laura Program*.

Utilitarianism and Communitarianism in Media Ethics

Utilitarianism is very popular among media ethics theorists in the West. It states that bringing happiness to the greatest number of people should be the ultimate criterion in distinguishing between good and bad. If an act, intended for the good by the individual actor, can bring happiness to most people, then it is ethical. Utilitarianism is therefore largely based on results. Most utilitarians would dismiss intention and be more interested in the results of actions, by substituting "good" for "happiness." This focus on majoritarianism gives little or no attention to the rights of minorities. Having assumed its own objectivity, utilitarianism is semantically relative and subjective (Merrill, 2006, p. 42). Most journalists who embody this ethics would substitute "good" for "happiness of the majority." This ethics would lead a journalist to provide content that makes most people happy, or at least comfortable; and he or she would do this by avoiding injuring the collective conscience of the majority (especially the one to which he or she belongs). This could involve tactics such as watering down the truth, mechanically "factualizing" it, or claiming objectivity for a fact or event instead of contextualizing it sufficiently.

This understanding of the core of a utilitarian media ethics echoes articulations by Land (2006), by Christians, Fackler, and Ferré (2012), and by John Merrill, who puts it like this:

> The utilitarian journalist is not necessarily the kind that many ethicists would consider a "quality" or a humanistically inclined journalist. In fact, modern journalism is a patchwork of sensational and titillating stories and pictures, which may very well bring happiness to the greatest number. Now "good" is another thing; it is highly doubtful that the vast wasteland of television and the print media is the result of a journalistic attempt to bring about "good." It could be … that happiness is a kind of opium for the public [that] brings with it the greatest amount of money to the media. Goodness, however, does not seem to be in great demand by the mass media publics or by society in general. (Merrill, 2006, p. 46)

Journalism practiced from this perspective is hardly separable from entertainment. Furthermore, utilitarianism is obsessed with individual freedom, as generally defined by Enlightenment philosophers. The way the concept of individual freedom is envisaged by a utilitarian media ethicist – as a concept about the individual's autonomy from any control whose source is not that individual's perception of

good and evil, regardless of collective wisdom – leads a journalist to put the "freedom of expression" and the "freedom of the press" in the service of a "free" economy. That is to say, freely expressing what most people want results in media corporate success, which in turn makes it possible to reach even greater audiences through good ratings and mighty advertising revenue. In such a scheme of thought, reaching greater numbers of people and making them happy is the essence of democracy. But what if the majority is wrong, as it proved to be the case when most Americans supported the recent – and longest – American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? Would this majority have been what it was – a majority – had the Bush administration's build-up toward these wars, especially in Iraq, been reported accurately and sufficiently? How much of the blame on the massive destruction and loss of life since 9/11 should the free market journalism bear?

We may never have accurate answers to these questions. But the powerfully emerging communitarian approach is giving us hope that, in the future, a morally inclined journalist may find a comfortable philosophical home to practice good interpretive journalism. Although emanating from the West, this approach celebrates, welcomes, and gracefully invites non-Western, nonutilitarian approaches that could contribute to reforming the field of media ethics theory. Like the Islamic reformist approach, the communitarian approach challenges the Enlightenment ideas on which the concepts of the dominant utilitarian approach are founded. A communitarian journalist practices his or her profession as an integral part of society, reporting from it rather that being outside of it. As Merrill (2006) explained, a communitarian journalist is not just an observer of a passing scene; he or she proposes to change or transform that scene. For such a journalist, claiming neutrality and objectivity can be done at the expense of a deeper, broader, more comprehensive truth. Therefore it is wrong for a journalist to claim objectivity and neutrality in a situation where taking sides could result in saving lives, or in justice or peace. For a communitarian journalist, facts are important, valid, and useful only as long as they are interpreted within a deeper and broader context. Such a concept goes beyond the usual concern with media ethics codes of newspaper workaday practice. In this scheme, truth is not just accurate information. Truth is a more complex and broader value in today's fast changing global society. Explaining the context behind the facts and getting to the heart of the matter is as important as, if not more important than, the facts themselves. This deep search for truth is called "interpretive sufficiency" by Clifford Christians, one of the founding fathers of communitarian media ethics theory. To explain this notion further, Christians says that "a sufficient interpretation opens up public life in all its dynamic dimensions. A newsworthy account that is truthful represents complex cultures and religions adequately. The people involved at all levels are portrayed authentically without stereotype or simplistic judgments" (Christians et al., 2012, pp. 35–36).

Communitarianism, as a powerful approach to global media ethics, has opened the global media theory field "in all its dynamic dimensions" to authentic non-Western paradigms. Among these is the Islamic reformist theory, the main object of this chapter.

Toward an Islamic Reformist Media Ethics Theory

> This Islamic quest for a modern identity is situated between Good Friday and Easter, between a past of deep imperial wounds and a forward-looking resurrection. To erase the modern West is to ignore the dark predicament of the Islamic present. To wipe the traditions of Islam away [Muslims would] render themselves a blank carbon copy of a modern West that has no room or place for their complexity and humanity. Democracy matters must confront this Islamic identity crisis critically and sympathetically. In other words, there can be no democracy in the Islamic world without a recasting of Islamic identity. This new modern identity that fuses Islam and democracy has not even been glimpsed by most westerners. So it behooves us to proceed in a self-critical and open manner … Just as there is a long Judeo-Christian tradition, there is a long Judeo-Islamic tradition. The role of Islamic figures in the history of Judaic and Christian thought is immense … These energies provide a hope for new democratic possibilities. (West, 2004, pp. 132–133)

In this brilliant description of the predicament of Islam and Muslims, Cornel West captured the true meaning of *jihad*. Islamic communities and individuals around the globe nowadays brim with infinite "energies" and "possibilities" that open them up to the rest of the world like never before. The concept of a "good community" is at the heart of the Muslim quest for a modern identity, because only in a good community can an individual be dignified, free, and equal. This is the real *jihad* facing any Muslim today.

Jihad in Arabic means "struggle." However, the West is mostly familiar with only the lower layer of this meaning, which is "armed struggle against non-Muslims who actively seek the destruction of Muslims." Another, higher layer of the meaning of *jihad* is deeper, universal, more transcendent, and most relevant to our times. But it has not been explained well to non-Muslims. The Prophet of Islam distinguished between two types of *jihad*, one major and one minor. The greatest *jihad* is the one against the self: it consists in seeking freedom, justice, self-control, and self-discipline. In one instance, Prophet Mohamed says: "The best *jihad* is a word of truth in the face of an unfair ruler." In another, while returning from a war, he said: "We just came from the minor *jihad* to the greater *jihad*." These notions clearly signify how important it is in Islam for an individual to engage in self-control and in causes related to embracing justice and exposing injustice. These universal values, essential for a truly deep democracy, receive immense moral legitimacy from the Islamic tradition.

The main *jihad* of a Muslim today ought to be the attempt to work freely – but guided by principles whose moral compass is compatible with universal values – toward creating an equitable world community. This struggle takes place in a world devoured by consumerism and fragmented by greed, where some indulge in instant gratification while billions are suffering. Such a world cannot produce a responsible, truly free and dignified individual (the ultimate goal to which all noble means are directed, including those of Islam and of the Qur'an itself).

According to the view developed here, a consumerist culture that commodifies women's bodies in advertising and other types of media content is only different from enslavement in degree, because it objectifies an individual and transforms a worthy life into a means of promoting another entity's profit-making schemes. A good community in Islam is one where individual freedom is in full service of communal justice and equality. A dignified, happy, and absolutely free individual is always well attuned to society and to the universe, and attaining this state is the end (or goal) of all human endeavors. Hence an individual is not a means to any other end, and should not be used as such.

Islamic reformism provides an epistemology in which absolute individual freedom does not conflict with communal equality and justice. Absolute individual freedom, in this sense, is not autonomous indirection (the I-am-free-to-do-anything-I-like notion prevalent in the West). Rather it is an organic component of the exercise of equality and justice in community. The free expression of self will be limited only by the individual's inability to exercise it without stepping on the rights of others in justice and equality. The relationship between the good individual and the good community, in essence, is a symbiotic one where equality and justice are enriched through individual freedom (and vice versa).

Consequently Islam provides for making the organization of the community a vehicle for the exercise of boundless individual freedom, as long as the community's interests and values are guarded and enriched. This equilibrium, derived from the concept of *tawhid* (monotheism and universal harmony), renders the individual worship of Allah (God) meaningless if its fruits are not reaped by the community, in the form of deeds of stewardship, fairness, truth telling, kindness, charity, mercy, and other kinds of selflessness (Taha, 1987, p. 84). *Tawhid*, according to Sufism – that is, mystical Islam, to which most Islamic reformists trace the origins of their ideas – is unity and harmony between all parts of the universe. *Tawhid* is also a purpose that causes the liberation of all humankind from bondage and servitude to many varieties of idols (Siddiqi, 2007). This clearly implies the existence of a common ground between the Islamic reformist ethics and the Judeo-Christian heritage from which Western ethics paradigms are driven.

In his book *Democracy Matters*, West (2004) skillfully explains that the democratic tenets and energies embedded in Islam are not to be confused with those of extremist and authoritarian clerical Islam. He further invites readers to visit the writings of reformist Muslim scholars like Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, Fatima Mernissi, Khalid Abou El-Fadl, and others.

A good Islamic community, according to Taha (1987), prepares the individual to be a good worshiper by setting a healthy environment in which he or she would enjoy communion with God and with the universe. In Taha's definition, absolute individual freedom is freedom from fear of death and freedom from need. To him, death is only a transition from one state of being to another. And the needs of the individual are well met in the good community, as he or she contributes to its welfare. In his understanding, *tawhid* means that the whole universe has one source. It emanated from God, and to God it shall return. But we, as elements in

the universe, shall return as individuals, not as groups. This implies the centrality of the individual and individual freedom and responsibility in Islamic discourse. Happy is the individual who returns to God – who is fair, free, good, and charitable – as a fair, good, free, and charitable individual. In this sense, the individual is a vicegerent of God on earth and is responsible for making the world more just (El-Fadl, 2004, p. 6).

These original precepts of a reformist Islamic ethics would trace their roots in the transcendent Qur'anic verses revealed in Mecca, the birthplace of Prophet Mohamed. By contrast, the verses revealed in Medina (where Prophet Mohamed migrated after tremendous persecution in Mecca) were transient and contextual in nature, although extremists and fundamentalists wrongly perceive them as permanent. The transient verses of Medina include passages about lower forms of *jihad*, as well as commands that make men guardians over women and generally precepts incompatible with modern universal values and human rights. But the Mecca verses are fully compatible with these values and rights.

In the spirit of Meccan verses freedom is only a hint of the absolute – *itlaq*, the infinitude of Allah. It is diffused on earth in portions adjusted to our capacity to appreciate and practice it responsibly. Therefore limitation is not fundamental; it is transient. The essence of freedom is the absolute. Limitation is only a transitional requirement, related to the development of any individual within a specific community and to the needs springing from the societal and historical phase through which that community is passing. On this view of Islam, every individual has the right to a fulfilling life and to freedom, regardless of religion, race, or sex. The individual in such a system of thought is capable of limitless development. He or she pursues, through a healthy community, absoluteness in communion with Allah, with His absolute oneness and openness, in a constant quest for perfection. "The goal of the worshiper in Islam is to achieve the perfection of God, and the perfection of God is infinite" (Taha, 1987, p. 84).

Therefore there is no final destination to be reached. The worshiper in this way is one who is free from all bondage. He or she is one who diligently strives to be free by striving to achieve the qualities of God, the just, the beneficent, and the merciful. To this effect Prophet Mohammed said: "Embody the qualities of God, for my Lord is on the straight path."

What prevents us from discharging the responsibilities leading to absolute individual freedom is ignorance and selfishness. The ignorantly selfish may pursue interests that are inconsistent with the interest of the community, whereas the intelligently selfless do not see their own interest to be incongruent with the interest of others. "One does not become a believer unless he wishes for his brother what he would wish for himself," Prophet Mohamed says.

According to the Islamic reformist media ethics theory, therefore, one person's dignity is not subordinate or enslaved to another's freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is not an end in itself. Speech that injures human dignity is not an expression of true freedom at all because, without preserving human dignity, we fail the test of being human, let alone being free. Accordingly any

journalist ought to use his/her faculty of observation, reason, consciousness, reflection, insight, understanding, and wisdom, realizing that these are the *amanah* (trust) of God. They must not be used either to injure a human soul for the sake of self-promotion or to sell news as if it were just another commodity. A journalist must not ignore God's purpose in creating this universe and various forms of life (Siddiqi, 2007). Thus one advice implicit in the notion of *tawhid* is that one should not to aggrandize those in power or those who are already treated as superstars and idols (Mowlana, 1989). The genuine practice of *tawhid* also requires from a journalist to engage in *jihad* against systems of thought and against structures based on racism, tribalism, and familial superiority (Siddiqi, 2007).

Another guiding Islamic principle, which should further be revisited and refined through a reformist perspective, is *amar bi al-Maruf wa nahi an al-munkar* ("calling for right and denouncing evil"). While this notion asks all individuals and communities to publicly engage in calling for good and in denouncing evil, it becomes an even more of a moral duty for a journalist to do so. A reformist Islamic approach would make this principle into a tool for public debates about good and evil, in the frame of which a journalist can function as an agent of social change. Unfortunately, the erroneous understanding and present practice of *amar bi al-Maruf wa nahi an al-munkar* in some Muslim countries made it a political tool of coercion in the hands of governments rather than a tool for energizing debate about good and evil in the public sphere.

Historically, Islam used channels of public communications, including mosques, to effectively mobilize public opinion and persuade individuals to work for the collective good though the pursuit of individual goodness. The effectiveness of these traditional media is now fast receding. Moreover, in today's highly individualistic and materialist global society, most of the press seems to play an opposite role, one of *amar bi Munkar wa nahi an al Maruf* ("calling for evil and denouncing good"). Most forms and channels of mass media today are more in line with government and corporate stakeholders. They are more interested in conflict, contention, disorder, and scandal than in justice, peace, stability, and moral attunement (Siddiqi, 2007).

Al Jazeera, however, is a different story. This Arab television network, broadcasting from Doha, Qatar, has introduced a journalism of Islamic "interpretive sufficiency," compatible with modern universal values. To do this, Al Jazeera had to abandon the limited perspective of fundamental Islam and to replace it with a perspective that has a strong Islamic reformist flavor. The fact that some extremists and nationalists voice their suffocating ideas in Al Jazeera opinion programs doesn't, and shouldn't, diminish the fact that Al Jazeera's news operation had made it a well-respected international contender for the job of reshaping the global conscience. As will be seen in the following section, Al Jazeera is no longer just a medium. Rather it is a school on its own and an organic part of the global media scene, powerfully contributing to the reconfiguration of the global communication "order" of our day.

The Place of Al Jazeera in the Global Media Ethics Debates

> [Al-Jazeera's] unrelenting pictures of death and injury, of massive shelling of villages, homes, and public buildings portrayed not a legitimate war on terror, but a hate-mongering superpower destroying a small country. And no amount of counter-publicity could reverse this interpretation. The civilian casualties took a heavy toll on the morale of coalition allies and undermined support for the war [in Afghanistan] in both the United States and Britain. (Christians et al., 2012, p. 24)

This account is an impressively accurate description of how the phenomenon of Al Jazeera has become a global force to reckon with. The mighty United States and its gigantic public diplomacy machine couldn't match the power of Al Jazeera in reshaping the world's perception of a militarized American foreign policy. Moreover, this young network not only replaced CNN (the Cable News Network), BBC (the British Broadcasting Corporation), and others as major sources of news, information, and opinion in the Arab and Islamic worlds, but it has actually beat them at their own game. This fascinating change in the direction, volume, and prism of news reporting and commentary made scholars interested in it – such as Seib (2008), Fandy (2007), Miles (2006), and Zayani (2005) – think of it as presenting a new, unparalleled, and powerful challenge to the old communication order dominated by the West.

Clearly nonutilitarian in perspective, Al Jazeera defies the norms of the old information order. Among others, Christians et al. (2012) saw Al Jazeera as a belated answer to calls for what became known as the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Those calls were made in 1980, after heated debates held by the United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization (UNESCO) during the late 1970s. The outcome fiercely tilted against Western hegemony of the global information and communication order. The developing nations strongly contended that the dominant global news services mostly ignored them in their reports. And, when they did report news about them, they accentuated the element of violence, reporting coups, natural disasters, and exotic episodes. This biased and degrading reporting left people around the globe "with the misimpression that developing nations as a class were primitive, unstable, and dangerous – curiosities to be pitied and avoided, certainly not countries worthy of capital investment" (Christians et al., 2012, p. 22).

To appreciate the outstanding power of Al Jazeera, one would have to look at its successes in accumulating accolades of international repute. This year, the journalists behind the Al Jazeera English documentary *Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark* have won the 63rd annual George Polk Award in Journalism (which is among the US' most coveted journalism awards). Al Jazeera's May Welsh and Hassan Mahfood joined Seymour Hersh, Ted Koppel, and Christiane Amanpour, previous winners of the George Polk Award. Al Jazeera also won the Alfred I. duPont–Columbia

University Award for the film *Haiti: Six Months On*. Other awards won by Al Jazeera include the News Channel of the Year Award from the Royal Television Society Awards; the Columbia Journalism Award; the UK Foreign Press Association Award; and the Peabody Award. Needless to say, the accumulation of such reputable awards in such a short period of time by such a young international news organization is unprecedented.

The Meaning of Al Jazeera for Muslim Reformists

A few points are worth stressing here. First, Al Jazeera, by far the number one choice of Arabs (Muslims and non-Muslims alike), has won over its competitors (BBC, CNN, Al Arabiya, and others) in the race for audience size and trust in the Middle East. Second, Al Jazeera is now steadily winning over more Western audiences, as it proves to be one of the most credible news organizations in the world. Third, Al Jazeera is the network of choice for the increasing populations of Muslims in Western countries. Fourth and most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the West cannot kill the tide of accurate news reporting flowing in a direction opposite to that of the old paradigm. (When the NWICO debates overwhelmed the US in the 1980s, the US withdrew from the organization, effectively killing the initiative.)

Thus the deliberate endeavors of Al Jazeera to put out an accurate picture of the Arab and Muslim worlds in the global media scene are changing the traditional definition of international news. These endeavors have marks of universalisms all over them. In many ways, this reform is in line with the reforms led by communitarian ethicists, who are almost as committed to the inclusion of Muslims in all venues of public communication as the Islamic reformists are. In the following statement, Christians, Fackler, and Ferré hint at a promise of bridging these two traditions to form an effective front for global change:

> Recognizing culturally based art and ritual, communitarianism keeps low walls between neighbors … The commitment to local languages, religion, culture, and social practice is a communitarian frame of mind that AJE [Al Jazeera English] understands and often illustrates for the world … AJE's commitment to covering the people themselves, their suffering and aspirations, reflects communitarian thinking … Perhaps it is blind optimism to imagine that any media network anywhere could embody in its coverage and mission a commitment to global peace, but we gladly notice that AJE already has many of the required tools at hand for working on the impossible. (Christians et al., 2012, pp. 35–36)

Al Jazeera is therefore leading two remarkable reformative processes in one historical stroke. First, the Arab and Muslim communities, through Al Jazeera, see themselves as part of a larger, more complex world, which defies their simplistic interpretations of it. Second, Al Jazeera is reforming the global media perceptions of Arab and Muslim communities. Because of Al Jazeera and its ilk, the world

is now abandoning its simplistic interpretations of Arab and Muslim cultures and communities for a more complex, sufficiently interpreted understanding of them. In short, Al Jazeera is contributing to bridging cultures that were seen as incompatible under the prism of the old information order. Al Jazeera, in effect, is hugely helping the effort toward building a good, peaceful global community.

Al Jazeera is therefore engaged in the higher-order *jihad*, where Muslims struggle for peace in quest for a modern identity without losing their soul. At the individual level, the Al Jazeera phenomenon is making Muslims and Arabs more confident in courageously telling stories of corruptions and power abuse. It is contributing to building a good local community in which an individual is dignified, free, and equal. This is the real *jihad* facing any Muslim today, and Al Jazeera is handling it skillfully, ethically, and professionally. The Muslim and Arab communities are now tapping and questioning their collective conscience, while at the same time their attempts to think globally and act locally are the focus of intense global attention. These communities are becoming "glocal," as they might be called by Roland Robertson (1994), who borrowed the term "glocalization" from Japanese and introduced it to the English-speaking world.

The Case of *The Dr. Laura Program*

As indicated earlier, this section of the chapter largely benefits from the author's own research. A detailed study of this case appeared in *Contemporary Media Ethics: A Practical Guide for Students, Scholars and Professionals* by Mitch Land, Koji Fuse, and Bill Hornanday (2014). The case involves an African American woman married to a white American, who called Laura Schlessinger's show to get advice on how to handle racist comments made by white people in her presence. She told Schlessinger that she was hearing such comments so often that she was now resentful of her own husband. Her husband and his friends and family acted as if she weren't there when those comments were made in their conversations. Media Matters, described on its website as a "non-profit progressive research and information center dedicated to comprehensively monitoring … conservative misinformation in US media," provided a full transcript of comments, which have been used here (Media Matters, 2010).

Unprompted, Schlessinger says that "a lot of black people" voted Obama into office because he is "half-black." It didn't matter what he was going to do in office. "It was a black thing." Then she asks the caller to provide examples of racist comments made in her presence. The caller points out that the N-word has often been thrown around in the conversations. Schlessinger says that black people, especially comedians, use it all the time and nobody dubs them as racists, to which the caller replies: "That doesn't make it right." Schlessinger goes on to utter the word "nigger" 11 times, not at the caller but to stress the frequency with which black people, especially comedians, use it. The caller is taken aback by the condescending, callous, and mocking tone with which the word was uttered so many times. And she says that, since Obama took office, racism has come to a

new level and white people are increasingly afraid of a black man "taking over" the country. Schlessinger accuses the caller of being too sensitive. She repeats this point, labeling the caller as "hypersensitive" and saying that she lacks a good sense of humor.

Schlessinger says: "Don't take things out of context. Don't double N – NAACP me"; and she argues that black activists have led blacks to demonize whites. To close the conversation, she says: "If you're that hypersensitive about color and don't have a sense of humor, don't marry out of your race." This was the advice the caller got.

This episode, rightfully, resulted in an immense public controversy. After persistent attempts to paint her comments as innocent and taken out of context and to argue that they should at least be seen as free speech, the radio show host publicly apologized. The apology didn't save the show. Many sponsors began to pull out. The controversy became more intense after the apology. Later, on August 17, 2010, Laura Schlessinger announced on "Larry King Live" that she will not renew her contract, which was up for renewal at end of the year.

An Islamic Reformist Analysis of an Episode From *The Dr. Laura Program*

As explained earlier, Islam highly values nurturing human dignity. Individuals must not be vehicles to any ends other than themselves in relation to community. In *The Dr. Laura Program*, it is clear that the African American caller's queries were used as a means of providing provocative, amusing, sensational talk show content. In the process, Laura Schlessinger overlooked the following factors: a distressed wife, who crossed race and color barriers to engage in public debate; the original problem of the caller; the feelings of the caller, the irony of accusing this transracial woman of being "hypersensitive," and the need to exercise a reasonable level of sensitivity toward her. Legitimatizing the use of the N-word on the grounds that blacks use it too became the focus of the conversation, and the caller was put on the defensive.

From the Islamic reformist perspective, it is safe to assume that the caller's dignity was not a priority to Schlessinger and her stakeholders – including the producers of the show and its advertisers. The well-being of the caller and her need for psychological and social balance were not important to them either. Putting the blame on her race – a historically distraught community – for vilifying whites was unfair, was not the issue, and unsolicited in the first place.

Schlessinger pointed out that, without the votes of the whites, black people (who represent only 12 percent of the US population) would not have been able to elect Barack Obama. Instead of grabbing this obvious fact as evidence of a progressive historical step in the march toward a just, racism-free America (in line with the caller's own transracial lived experience), Schlessinger muddied the conversation by putting the blame on the caller. As if urging the caller to stop

whining, Schlessinger stated: "Yeah. We've got a black man as president, and we have more complaining about racism than ever. I mean, I think that's hilarious." Not even a single word of sincere individualized advice – the main purpose of the program – was provided. The caller and her race were ungrateful in the eyes of Schlessinger. The only statement that came close to being individualized advice was "don't marry out of your race." According to Islamic reformist theory, *The Dr. Laura Program* fails the test of humaneness, the value that should have had priority. Passionate shunning instead of compassionate inclusion was dispensed to the caller, as if she were the spokesperson of her whole race.

In Islamic reformist view, individual freedom, including freedom of speech, is a prerequisite for and a function of communal welfare. Stepping over another individual's dignity and humiliating people in the name of "freedom of expression" don't conform to this notion. In Islam, as in communitarian ethics, responsibility is always attached to freedom. A free person is one who thinks as he or she wishes, says what he or she thinks, then puts into practice what he or she has said and takes full responsibility for it. At a higher level, the absolutely free is one who thinks freely, speaks freely, and acts freely, yet whose thoughts, words, and actions result only in goodness and thoughtful stewardship for the living and for the inanimate resources (Taha, 1987). Every thought counts, and it should be morally weighed before it is uttered; every utterance must enlighten and must be translated into a good deed. This is the essence of absolute individual freedom.

On the contrary, thoughtless, sensationalized utterances not only degrade and negate freedom, they actually suffocate it. Thinking of freedom as the right to think, say, and do anything, regardless of consequences for the community, is not freedom. Entertaining the majority for the sake of good ratings, regardless of the morale of minorities, betrays a naïve conception of both freedom and "happiness." Commercializing free speech by making it available in large volumes to those who can afford buying media time and space is an outstanding characteristic of the utilitarian and consumerist Western "democracies" of our times. This state of things is legitimized through the concept of happiness for the greatest numbers, which is key to utilitarianism. According to the Islamic reformist approach, this untamed quest for false "happiness" in the form of consumerism leads to the profanation of truths, which come to be colored with the wishes, wants, and desires of the wealthy and powerful.

Truth, in Islamic discourse, is sacred. Therefore it should not be subjected to manipulation by special interests. From this perspective, sensationalizing truth is profaning it. This is what happened when the fact – a partial truth – that black people use the N-word was invoked to legitimize its being used by anybody who may want to do so. Deriding the caller as deficient in her sense of humor also pointed, indirectly, to the fact that the talk show culture in the United States puts a prime value on humor and entertainment rather than on truth. In Islamic culture, when one laughs loudly for a sustained period of time, he or she will say *Istaghfar Allah*, which may be translated as "Oh, God forgive me." While Islam doesn't necessarily paint humor as a sin, it definitely condemns trivializing truth in

the form of irony (especially when it is used for the sole purpose of generating empty, amusing laughter). Thus truth, as understood by Muslims, becomes another victim of Schlessinger's program.

As for stewardship of resources, Schlessinger's program clearly violates ethical standards set by Islamic reformism. The Islamic reformist conception of stewardship of resources is strongly linked to the values of justice and freedom. Utilitarian ethics, on the other hand, feeds the machine of consumerism, which is crushing our social fabric and our environment. Freedom as understood and practiced in the West, for instance in the "free market," produces individuals caught up in this machine. Instead of giving birth to individuals free from want and free from fear, a consumerist community produces unhealthy, selfish, and dangerous competition over individual, local, national, and global resources. An unregulated "free market" obsessed with consumption runs against the Islamic concept of freeing individuals from enslavement to things and to temporal pleasures. A free society, where the word "free" means unchecked individual autonomy, is inherently destructive to the social fabric and to the environment (because it encourages people to consume more than they need, and vastly more than they produce). In a race against time, we want to live longer, look younger, and have as much "fun" as possible before our days are over. We are in constant pursuit of "happiness," as defined by models of the utilitarian free market ethics and as practiced by "free" corporate media. In an unjust world, we consume more than our share of the limited resources of the earth and we encroach on the share of future generations. Media outlets, including radio talk shows like *The Dr. Laura Program*, are culprits in this unchecked process. The millions of dollars that talk show hosts amass, the private jets that corporate executives and advertisers use for pleasure and business, the mansions, each of which consumes electricity that may light up whole villages, stand as testaments to a "free world" gone wild.

Conclusion

The two examples used here – Al Jazeera and *The Dr. Laura Program* – present new challenges and possibilities for evaluating current Western media ethics theory and practice. They clearly implicate the utilitarian media ethics approach as a culprit in the highjacking of broadcast journalism by global corporate interests. Being based on reformist principles, not on corporate interests, Al Jazeera demonstrates the possibility of a journalism grounded in Islamic ethics compatible with present standards for universal values. This possibility presents a huge challenge to major international news broadcasting networks. As Al Jazeera sheds more light on problems and areas deemed unimportant in the past, in the old paradigm of news reporting, it begins to set a more equitable agenda and forces other news media to follow suit. This new phenomenon, which leads to the "glocalization" of world news, begins to render the Western utilitarian approach obsolete. News reporting in this model is based on its value as a tool in the hands of agents of

change, as a narrative with communal and social impact, as a building block in the pyramid of peace, not just as a commodity that makes most people feel good by being "informed."

One implication of this change is that being informed doesn't mean anything if those informed do not have the ethical tools to act on the information gathered, so as to morally enrich their social and material ecologies. Al Jazeera is loudly telling the world that the news media can be informative while being an agent of change of historical proportions. One has only to look at how this giant news organization has contributed to the Arab Spring revolutions to appreciate this fact. Another implication is that the flow of news between the northern and the southern hemispheres is now being rechanneled for a more equitable access and distribution. This is forcing the world, especially the West, to see Arabs and Muslims – both individuals and communities – in terms and worldviews appreciative of their humanity and complexity (an element almost entirely absent in older paradigms).

The Dr. Laura Program's case analysis presented a challenge to the utilitarian approach and an opportunity to look into new possibilities of theorizing on media ethics from non-Western perspectives. This is done not necessarily to compete with or confront the West, but to join hands with Western perspectives that appreciate multiple and global sources of wisdom. The analysis of the use of the N-word by Dr. Laura Schlessinger in her program clearly uncovered a great overlap between the Islamic reformist approach to media ethics theory and the communitarian perspective. One implication is that researchers should be encouraged to work on uncovering more and more common ground between different traditions and worldviews, in order to help us arrive at multiple ways of understanding ourselves and appreciating one another as individuals and communities from varied backgrounds and cultures. This applies to all areas of life, and it should apply even more to media ethics theory, because of the high stakes of media content dissemination. Another implication is that truth is not necessarily idle, accurate facts. It is a value that involves pieces from all the complexities of the human condition – what it means to be a good human being, in good harmony with others, at a given time and place. It is an obvious fact that Obama would not have been elected president of the United States without white votes. It is a fact that blacks would never have been able to elect him on their own. It is yet another fact that many blacks use the N-word in their conversations with one another, or as comedy fodder. But these "facts" were abused by Dr. Laura Schlessinger in a manner that muddied the truth and made these facts tools working in opposition to what a comprehensive truth should entail. The Islamic reformist approach to media ethics and the communitarian approach would clearly agree that a comprehensive truth is always on the side of elevating human dignity, not injuring it. A "truth" that humiliates a human being, or a whole community, is not truth at all. It could be a naked "fact" masquerading as truth.

In conclusion, communications scholars, educators, and practitioners must re-examine all the old paradigms that got us where we are today. These paradigms were once, in their own day, the most appropriate tools of change. But in our new

day, the day of Al Jazeera and of Islamic reform, new theories should emerge among other, equally important global reforms. And, dear reader, by virtue of having reached this point in the chapter, you could be one of those who should do something about this!

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42

Media Ethics Theories in Africa

Herman Wasserman

Does African media theory exist? What does it look like?

These questions are in the first place not specific questions about the appropriateness of the dominant theories of media and communication, but they relate more broadly to the construction of knowledge, the validity granted to different epistemologies, the construction of "the idea of Africa" itself within Western theoretical discourses (Mudimbe, 1988), and the historical relation between knowledge and the exercise of geopolitical power (Foucault, 1980; Said, 1978).

These are broad and complex matters that go well beyond the scope of a single chapter like this one. Although this chapter will focus on media theory and will exemplify the discussion of media theory in Africa by means of a more specific subfield, namely media ethics, the discussion will, very briefly, take its point of departure from these questions. This is to signal the importance of thinking about the de-Westernization of media theory within the broader context of historical debates about the dialectical relationship between African modernities and theorizing in the global North, the role of theory in the service of colonialism, and the fraught politics of insider/outsider knowledge in the study of Africa (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2012).

This chapter will follow a two-pronged approach. First, some brief remarks will be offered on the construction of media theory within the context of debates about African epistemology, especially with regard to recent attempts to de-Westernize and internationalize global media theory. Thereafter, to illustrate how these processes have played out in a specific subfield of media theory, a discussion of African media ethical theories will be provided.

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Media Theory and "De-Westernization"

It can be argued that Comaroff and Comaroff's recent observations about theory in the wake of the Western Enlightenment can also be seen as true of the bulk of media scholarship. Here are these observations:

> Western Enlightenment thought has, from the first, posited itself as the wellspring of universal learning, of Science and Philosophy, uppercase; concomitantly, it has regarded the non-West – variously known as the ancient world, the orient, the primitive world, the third world, the underdeveloped world, the developing world, and now the global south – primarily as a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions, of exotic ways and means. Above all, of unprocessed data. These other worlds, in short, are treated less as sources of refined knowledge than as reservoirs of raw fact: of the historical, natural, and ethnographic minutiae from which Euromodernity might fashion its testable theories and transcendent truths, its axioms and certitudes, its premises, postulates, and principles. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 1)

When applying the above problematic, as spelled out by Comaroff and Comaroff, to media theory, two aspects are especially pertinent. First, the production of knowledge about the media as a feature of global modernity has been skewed to make us believe that developments in the North have universal validity, or at least are dominant; second, when contextual knowledge from Africa is included in media scholarship, such knowledge is usually treated as raw material, or as "unprocessed data" in the Comaroffs' terms. Seen in this way, the media in Africa – their production, consumption, and philosophies – appear variously as an example of global trends, as curious anomalies or exceptions to the rule, or as "data" resulting from "fieldwork" – data to be processed elsewhere, in support of theories originating outside the African context. In other words, the North provides the theoretical narrative, while examples from elsewhere are used to add local color, as it were; to serve as evidence for the theoretical argument made by the North. This is tantamount to what Shiva summarized in the formula "the West as theory, the East as evidence" (Shiva, 1989, p. 118).

There is, however, a growing realization that media studies "remains a largely nationally bound and inward-looking area of academic enquiry," marked by a "parochialism" (Thussu, 2009, p. 1) that not only reflects the hegemony of the global North but also is inadequate to theorize the dynamics of a globally interconnected media environment, especially in the light of the changing global geopolitics and of the emergence of new media regions such as those in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries – what Zakaria (2008) called "the rise of the rest." Given these rapid changes, earlier attempts to "de-Westernize" media studies (Curran & Park, 2000) might already require a change of focus – a "rest-ernization" designed to acknowledge the emergence of new centers of media power and of new transnational flows and counterflows of media capital and content, beyond the northern metropolitan centers.

There have been some important efforts in recent years to escape the "epistemological essentialism" (Thussu, 2009, p. 16) dominating northern media studies – for instance Thussu (2009) or Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009). The limitation of these contributions has often been that they collect case studies from outside the global North without necessarily using the input emerging from these case studies to challenge the dominant theoretical assumptions of media theory, such as the relationship between media and democracy, the normative foundations for media ethics, or the relationship between technology and society. Even when global perspectives on theoretical debates are acknowledged as necessary, the impression is still too often created that the "global context" was added as an afterthought rather than resulting from a throughgoing engagement with the theoretical "other" that may subvert the foundations upon which the scholarly project – conceived and executed in the North – rests. Of course the problem is compounded through political and economic reasons, for example the lack of access to international conferences hampering the work of academics in the developing world, or the shortage of funding to conduct extensive surveys in southern contexts. But, as Francis Nyamnjoh points out with regard to the production of knowledge in journalism and media studies, the inclusion and exclusion operating in scholarly publishing that often works against African scholars is not always a matter of economics or scientific "quality," but one of dominant perspectives:

> Western scholarship tends to determine who is going to be included and who excluded, and that does not always have to do with the quality of scholarship being produced. A journal that is based in the United Kingdom, run by somebody who has assumptions about the world and North/South divisions, might take positions about which papers will be published. Those decisions have very little to do with science, but more with the politics of scholarly production. It therefore becomes very difficult for African ideas, African scholarship, African research to filter through. (Nyamnjoh, quoted in Wasserman, 2009, p. 286)

The dangers that threaten any attempt to redress this skewed picture are, however, twofold. First, the notion of "Africa" can become homogenized and essentialized as a result of drawing on romantic and idealistic notions of a society that is either pristine or completely different from northern modernities. Such a view of Africa does not take into account the many different cultures and societies living on the continent and the varied roles that the media and media systems may play in them. Therefore a focus on the lived experiences of Africans in relation to the media would be a more productive approach to broadening media theory than the search for some presumed essence – say, "Africanness" or "African philosophy." Second, the well-intentioned efforts to include perspectives from Africa might result in an African exceptionalism that ghettoizes Africa by limiting it to "area studies" and in so doing relegates it further to the margins, instead of bringing it to the center of media theory. This can for instance be seen in the prominence that chapters on Africa are afforded in edited collections. Are they positioned to engage the

dominant theoretical discussion, or are they merely added on as "evidence" or "examples"? Nyamnjoh describes as follows the dangers of such attempts to counter the dominance of northern theory:

> Area studies in general is a bit like that – you make a deliberate decision that attention is going to be paid to Africa in programming, in planning, in budgeting and so on. But at the same time you run the risk of making it stand apart, as something "out there," something to be studied by those who are interested in those margins. The main business, of studying the disciplines and universal concerns, takes place elsewhere. (Nyamnjoh, quoted in Wasserman, 2009, p. 288)

The result of this kind of approach to media studies in areas that fall outside the dominant northern context (and not only to media studies that concerns itself with Africa) is that global media studies, too, often provides a "panorama of the field" (Nordenstreng, 2009, p. 255) rather than a coherent attempt to revisit central epistemological and methodological assumptions on the basis of the diverse range of experiences uncovered.

As Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) warn us, however, turning around the Manichean binary North/South so as to privilege the South is not the correct way to address these historical and epistemic imbalances. Attention should be paid instead to how the epistemic traditions of the North and the South have become entwined, so that the story of modernity – of which the media form a part – "can as well be narrated from its undersides as it can from its self-proclaimed centers" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, pp. 6–7). Nyamnjoh (2012), in his critique of African anthropology, also argues for more co-creation of knowledge between African insiders and Western outsiders and warns against insufficient self-reflexivity on the part of researchers about their own position and the vantage point from which they produce knowledge about the continent.

The question then arises: How are we to build a media theory rooted in the lived experience of Africans in specific contexts, without lapsing into essentialism or exceptionalism?

Historically, this question has been asked by scholars who wanted to develop a media theory separate from – and often in opposition to – Western normative frameworks. One area of the broader media and communications field in which this can clearly be seen is that of media ethics. To illustrate how theory building about the African media has developed over the years, we will now focus more specifically on media ethics theory.

Media Ethics in Africa

Perhaps the most prominent media ethics scholar in Africa is the late Zambian academic Francis Kasoma, whose "Afriethics" provided a point of reference for many subsequent critiques or reappraisals (e.g., Banda, 2009; see Kasoma, 1994).

His development of an African media ethics theory illustrates the critical stance of many African scholars toward northern theory, but it also exemplifies some of the pitfalls of an African theorization of the media. More recently, the question about the existence and characteristics of an African media ethics also features in debates about global media theory (see, for instance, Christians, Rao, Ward, & Wasserman, 2008). The former – the older approach to African media theory and ethics generated by Kasoma – has often been informed by a certain insistence on African exceptionalism or difference, an elusive search for a "distinct African journalism paradigm that stands out as an agreed alternative to a Western or Northern paradigm" (Skjerdal, 2012, p. 637). By contrast, the latter – the more recent attempt to explore African media ethics in conjunction with global media theory – has been inspired by the desire to find mutual ground and similarities between African normative frameworks, particularly those defining personhood and social relations, and frameworks found elsewhere on the globe (such as, for example, Christians' comparison between the African philosophy of *ubuntu* and the Western tradition of communitarianism: see Christians, 2004). Scholarship in global media ethics is concentrating around the question of how to account for a diversity of perspectives globally (including perspectives from Africa) while avoiding cultural relativism. The incorporation of these various "local" perspectives into a global media theory is further complicated by the fact that a "local" or "regional" ethics is not monolithic. African communications scholars have been much more invested in how to get good things done for people than in solving ontological debates concerning ultimate realities, yet there seems to be little consensus on what "good" entails. As Skjerdal (2012, p. 637) reminds us, there is no consensus about what an African normative paradigm would look like. Nor, in fact, should exploring African media ethical frameworks mean setting up a binary opposition between "Africa" and "the West," as Western media ethical traditions also differ greatly and range from liberal individualism to communitarianism, from Rawlsian contractualism to feminist ethics of care, each one contracting a set of givens concerning how people communicate, how power is distributed, what justice entails, where additional scholarly work should be done. Similarly, explorations of African media theory and ethics should avoid the cultural essentialist notion of *one* "African" tradition. Although African approaches to media norms are rooted in African philosophies and practices that may set them apart from the Western perspectives that dominate media literature, they span a range of viewpoints. Skjerdal (2012, p. 640) identifies three major streams of African models: journalism for social change, communal journalism, and journalism based on oral discourse. Within each of these models a variety of viewpoints taken by different scholars can be noted.

An investigation into African media theory and ethics is important not only because media literature is dominated by perspectives from the global North and hence the contribution of different perspectives from the global South can enrich media theory building. Attention to African paradigms is important also because they remind us that the dominant northern perspectives in media theory and ethics are themselves rooted in specific cultural conditions, despite their

occasional claims to universal validity. Critiques of dominant media scholarship from the perspective of postcolonial theory have suggested that constructs such as "freedom" and "responsibility," often presented as having universal validity, are themselves "local" in that they have originated in particular epistemological traditions, rooted in Western thought and experience (Rao & Wasserman, 2007; Wasserman & Rao, 2008). In the context of media globalization it is therefore important to eschew grand narratives and totalizing schemes for global media *theory* in favor of more nuanced, textured understandings of the specific cultural and political histories within which theory and ethics are interpreted and operationalized, especially in various settings outside the northern metropolitan centers. As Shome (2009) has implied in her trenchant critique of the "internationalization" of cultural studies, the hidden assumption that theories originating in the West have universal validity can be seen as an epistemological power discourse. In the area of media ethics, where the application of communications theory begins to carry impact for professionals and audiences, the globalization of the "social responsibility" framework, which originated in the US in the 1940s, is an example of such a universalization that actually has very limited applicability to global contexts (Christians & Nordenstreng, 2004). The inclusion of "other" perspectives in discussions of media ethics therefore needs to go beyond superficial nods to frameworks like *ubuntu* and *ujamaa*, because such nods could easily lapse into an exoticism and essentialism that would reaffirm the dominant theories instead of challenging them. For instance, Skjerdal (2012, p. 649) points out that journalists on the continent often combine "universal aspirations" with "local commitments": "African journalists regard themselves as members of a wider professional community while simultaneously maintaining a local identity." As African journalists aspire to membership of a global professional community, they adopt Western libertarian "watchdog" models that are then localized in various ways, in response to the countervailing demands for journalists to follow "African values." "Indigenous approaches" and other idealistic notions of African media theory need to make way for more empirical work on how values are put into practice and how everyday practices result in a mixture of global and local frameworks and value systems – a "glocalization" of media ethics (Wasserman & Rao, 2008).

Against the backdrop of current explorations of global media ethics (e.g., Ayish & Rao, 2012), any attempt that seeks to uncover the voices of the "other" would also have to include a critical dimension. Withouth critical interrogation, a global narrative ethics might end up being a mere collection of ethical stories that remain unchallenged, and perhaps incompatible. The investigation into African media ethics therefore has to avoid treating "Africa" as homogenous and internally uncontested and has to refuse to adopt romantic or idealistic notions of an "African culture." Instead, a dialogic approach that takes the development of ethical values as part of the changing dynamics of everyday life, where humans are "understood as cultural beings" entwined in relationships (Christians, 2010, p. 183), can resist essentialist and romanticizing reductions.

In an attempt to highlight these dynamic interchanges and contestations within the field of African media ethics, this chapter will provide a brief overview of some of the frameworks within which media ethics in Africa has been located. The chapter does not so much attempt to establish *an* African media ethics, nor does it even claim to provide a comprehensive picture of media ethics *in* Africa; but it will throw light on some perspectives on media ethics *from* the point of view of African experience.

When we explore the characteristics of African media ethics, this has to be done against the backdrop of media globalization: Africa cannot be seen as a hermetically sealed, geographically bound entity where pristine cultural values can be found. In the contemporary global media landscape, questions are being asked about the reach and scope of existing media ethics frameworks. If the media are global in their reach and impact, do they also owe ethical loyalties to global audiences? Can media ethics codes be developed that are global in their scope and validity?

African media practitioners therefore have to negotiate the space between ethical norms and practices, as these have evolved – in their particular sociocultural and political environments on the one hand, and in globalized ethical discourses laying claim to universal validity, on the other hand. An example of the intersection between universal and regional discourses was the landmark Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press in 1991 (Windhoek Declaration, 1991). In this declaration, African journalists invoked the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a reason for the promotion of press freedom in the particular African context. The spread of global media to African audiences (for instance through satellite television) and the reach of African media to global audiences (for instance through new media technologies such as the Internet, often aimed at Africans in the diaspora) have positioned African media ethics in a context that is increasingly transnational. For African media ethicists, this global/local intersection poses challenges. What norms should be used when evaluating media content in this transnational sphere? Are African ethical norms appropriate to deal with globalized media in a postmodern age? Conversely, can ethical frameworks derived from the global North provide appropriate guidelines for ethical action in African contexts that differ in many respects from those in which the dominant normative media theories have been devised?

As several case studies from Africa have made clear (see, e.g., Lodamo & Skjerdal, 2009; Ndangam, 2006), the circumstances under which African journalists work are often so radically different from those obtaining in the North that a wholesale importation of northern ethical frameworks would be unsuitable. More recent scholarly concerns about "global media ethics" run the risk of – again, albeit inadvertently – imposing northern norms under the guise of universalism, as postcolonial critics have argued (Rao & Wasserman, 2007; Wasserman, 2006). Calls for the "indigenization" of media ethics have demanded recognition for contextual specificity and local cultural values. In South Africa, for example, the end of apartheid has led to attempts to rediscover idealized values of African

culture. The accent has fallen, again, on communalistic alternatives to an individualistic ethics that is seen as closely linked to Western individualism.

These attempts to "Africanize" media ethics have often met with fierce criticism for their perceived idealism and for the idealizing notions of Africanness they are considered to propagate. This was also the weakness of perhaps the most widely known African response to northern media ethics theory, that of the Zambian ethicist Francis Kasoma (see Kasoma, 1994, 1996, 2000):

> The urge to imitate the Americans and Europeans who introduced journalism into Africa – together with colonialism … and evangelism – seems to have had much more influence on African journalists, than any sense of what would be appropriate, and right, in their own context. (Kasoma, 1994, p. 4)

Within the framework developed by Kasoma, media freedom raised the imperative of greater responsibility toward African cultural and societal values. The metaethics underpinning ethical praxis in this system is based on "African philosophy" because ethical actions "should take into account the African approach to life" even if this approach does choose to include principles and values from elsewhere (p. 8). These values should take into account the material conditions within which African journalists work (e.g., poor pay, which makes them susceptible to bribes, p. 19), but also their orientation toward the "family, clan and community" rather than toward the individual. For Kasoma, this responsibility to society in a communal sense rather than to society as a collection of individuals distinguishes African ethics from Western approaches (p. 27). In this kind of communal orientation, consensus is seen as more important than a majority or utilitarian decision (p. 28). Kasoma's Afriethics is based on a strong sense of (religious) morality and communal bonds (see Banda, 2009, for a comprehensive summary and re-assessment of Kasoma's position).

Although Kasoma points out that consensus should not be mistaken for an uncritical support of national unity as imposed by governments, Tomaselli (2003, p. 430) has characterized Kasoma's view of the media as being more of a "guidedog" than a "watchdog."

Kasoma's attempt to construct an Afriethics has further been criticized for its romanticizing notions of an idyllic African society untouched by the West (e.g., Banda, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 91). Because of the dangers of essentializing African culture when African media practices are contrasted with Western norms (see Tomaselli's critique in Tomaselli, 2003), other scholars (as already mentioned) have sought connections between indigenous ethical frameworks such as *ubuntu* and Western approaches like communitarianism rather than pitting them against each other (see Christians, 2004; Wasserman & De Beer, 2004). The relational ethics of *ubuntu* – "a person is a person through other persons," or, "I am because you are" – has also been criticized as a problematic foundation for media ethics, as it can again serve as an essentialist framework that may exclude certain voices or stifle criticism (Fourie, 2007).

Appeals to African values can also be used as a rhetorical strategy by politicians to curtail media freedom or to counter criticism by the media. In South Africa, for instance, former president Mbeki appealed to journalists to remember that they were "Africans before you became journalists and that despite your profession, you are still Africans" (Mbeki, 2003), a statement that could be understood as an attempt to garner support for Mbeki's agenda of an "African Renaissance." More recently, South African Communist Party general secretary Blade Nzimande called for an "insult law" to protect president Zuma's dignity against attacks by whites (Ndenze, 2012). This proposal comes in the wake of a protracted legal battle between Zuma and cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro ("Zapiro") about cartoons that depict Zuma raping Lady Justice in the context of a rape charge brought against him in 2006. Zuma claimed the cartoon damaged his reputation and injured his dignity, but eventually he dropped the charges in 2012 (Underhill, 2012). The call for an "insult law" in South Africa follows the example of similar laws in many African countries that are meant to protect politicians' dignity from "insults" by the media. Berger has, however, indicated how these laws regularly result in harassment for journalists in Africa (Berger, 2007, p. 141). The notion of African values can easily be misconstrued to support cultural relativism – the idea that African media should follow their own moral guidelines and that ethical values derived from other traditions are wholly unsuitable in the African context. Such a relativistic stance can easily be abused and made to serve the interests of an elite class that can avoid scrutiny by dismissing any criticism as Eurocentric or Western (Tomaselli, 2003, p. 430). Using "African values" as a normative basis for media practice could therefore pose a threat to freedom of expression, because criticism of government or politicians may be cast as un-African, un-patriotic or disrespectful toward authority (Fourie, 2007; Tomaselli, 2009, p. 13).

Media ethics in Africa can, therefore, be seen as a contested terrain. Various normative frameworks continue to coexist and compete for dominance. These ethical frameworks also have a political dimension, as they may support conflicting visions of whom African media owe their primary responsibility to and what their degree of freedom should be. It should not be taken for granted that the use, in African media contexts, of central ethical concepts such as media freedom and social responsibility necessarily corresponds with their use elsewhere. Nor should it be assumed that these ethical values are understood in the same way across various African contexts, or even in different sections of the media in African countries.

But the fact that the development of an African media ethics has up until now been fraught with problems does not take away the need for an ethical framework that takes the experience of African media practitioners and consumers seriously. Any attempt to revitalize a discussion around African media ethics would, however, have to acknowledge the location of African media within a dynamic, globalized context. This means that an African media ethics would avoid static, idealized notions of "culture," would instead incorporate democratic citizenship and empowerment as central values (Banda, 2009), and would develop a new definition of culture (Tomaselli, 2009, p. 11). Such a definition moves away from

anthropological notions of African culture as a bounded way of life but acknowledges that Africa is part of a postmodern global media landscape, marked by complex transnational cultural flows, where commonly held ideas of Africanness are being fractured (p. 15). In view of such a dynamic notion of culture, a normative framework based on homogenous cultural values or populist calls for a return to tradition is unsustainable.

To return to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter – What does African media ethics look like? – we can summarize three main ethical frameworks that have been used in African media contexts. These frameworks continue to coexist in the normative views of media practitioners today. They are: development journalism, indigenous ethics, and professionalization.

The development journalism framework

One of the defining normative frameworks within which journalists in Africa have understood their role is that of development journalism. Although originating in Asia in the 1960s, the approach also gained popularity in Africa and Latin America (Xiaoge, 2009, p. 357), hence it may be seen as a transnational normative framework for developing regions (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009, p. 200). Development journalism may be seen as an attempt to develop collaboration between the media and governments into a normative theory (p. 198). According to this framework, the media's primary responsibility is to promote social and economic development. This framework is often criticized for its perceived uncritical stance especially toward postcolonial governments – criticized, namely, as an attempt to support these governments' economic, political, and cultural development goals. For this reason, the development journalism framework is frequently seen as antithetical to the Western libertarian approach.

Some critics have, however, argued that development journalism is not necessarily incompatible with Western frameworks of social responsibility. When understood as a type of journalism that examines, evaluates, and reports on the relevance and success of development programs – which also means criticizing governments that fall short of developmental goals – development journalism can be consistent with social responsibility theory (Ogan, 1982, p. 10). Arguably such a definition of development journalism might not be based on collaboration anymore (Christians et al., 2009, pp. 198–199), but more closely resembles watchdog journalism, albeit with an orientation toward developmental issues. An alternative notion of "emancipatory journalism" has also been proposed as a way to redirect attention to the way journalism can affect social change and improve people's living conditions instead of focusing primarily on the relationship between media and the state (Shah, 1996).

Despite the problems inherent in it as a normative framework, development journalism continues to feature strongly in contemporary discourses of African journalism. As African journalism practices are increasingly infused with global philosophies and ideologies and African media institutions are integrated into

a globalized media landscape, African journalists have to balance globalized assumptions with the expectations and imperatives of the societies in the developing world within which they work (Musa & Domatob, 2007, p. 315). As a result, the role of journalists in developing countries is "complex, sometimes contradictory" (p. 317). Within this framework, seemingly universal values such as freedom and responsibility might correspond notionally but are interpreted and operationalized differently. As Musa and Domatob state:

> At critical junctures, the fault lines in the perceived common ground between development journalists and their Western counterparts have been exposed. From the time of the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s and 1960s to the post 9/11 world, it has become obvious that when First World and Third World journalists say they are committed to truth, freedom, and the common good, they each have different understandings of these concepts or pursue them through different means. (Musa & Domatob, 2007, p. 320)

Empirical studies in African democracies (Wasserman, 2010, 2011) have shown how ethical concepts like "freedom" and "responsibility" are understood differently by journalists and other stakeholders in the political communication process. As Skjerdal (2012) points out, the question of media ethics in Africa is also a semantic one – about how media ethical concepts are reappropriated, contextualized, and operationalized in different contexts. This reappropriation and contextualization can take the form of indigenization, which is another major strand of media ethics in Africa.

The indigenization of ethics

The development journalism discourse discussed above provided an impetus for the discourse on the indigenization of media ethics in Africa. In order for the media to contribute to the achievement of developmental goals, it was seen as necessary that they should adapt central ethical principles to the African context. Another impetus for the indigenization of media ethics has been the increased political pluralism and widespread liberalization of the African media in the 1990s. The "third wave of democratization," which spread across the continent in the 1990s, in many cases meant greater freedom for journalists, but also demanded of them to "take responsibility for their unethical actions instead of blaming them on government" (Kasoma, 1994, p. 3). Francis Kasoma's "Afriethics" (which has recently been reappraised by Banda, 2009) was developed within this liberalized context, as an attempt to retain a strong sense of morality and communal bonds amid greater freedoms.

An example of the indigenization of ethical principles is the philosophy of *ubuntu* discussed above. It aims to reorient the individualism inherent in many northern ethical frameworks toward the community, and, as Christians (2004) has pointed out, this framework has many aspects in common with the tradition of communitarianism. It is when such indigenization is premised on an idealized notion of African culture

that it becomes problematic. Attempts to indigenize ethics often treat Africa as a monolith, glossing over complex social and cultural differences with little acknowledgement of how African cultures have been influenced by historical processes such as colonialism, nationalism, and globalization (Banda, 2009, p. 236; Tomaselli, 2009, p. 13). Moreover, the resurrection of idealized African values does not take into account the contemporary African media's location in a globalizing world and in a changing media environment, where diversity and pluralism are valued, rather than static cultural norms (Fourie, 2007). Using "African values" as a normative basis for media practice is also seen as posing a threat to freedom of expression because criticism of government or politicians may be cast as un-African, un-patriotic, or disrespectful toward authority (Fourie, 2007; Tomaselli, 2009, p. 13).

It is against the background of these problems with indigenization and within the context of a dynamic, globalized, and fast-changing media industry that African journalists often choose to identify with an international professional class and to adopt ethical frameworks such as "social responsibility" or "watchdog journalism," which are perceived as having universal relevance (compare Skjerdal, 2012, p. 649).

Professionalism and social responsibility

The realization that networks of meaning and social identities in African societies are experiencing rapid transitions as a result of global cultural flows and counter-flows (Tomaselli, 2009, p. 16) has led to calls for more dynamic ways of thinking about media ethics in the African context. Under the influence of global narratives of media freedom, journalistic professionalism and democratic participation – central values for media ethics in contemporary Africa – are being linked to the importance of critique as a feature of robust democracy, the opening up of spaces for debate, the inclusion of a plurality of voices, and participation in a global dialogue (p. 17).

The interventionist strategies of "media development" driven by NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and by funding bodies in the North that have an aim of capacitating media in the South can be seen as part of this trend (Berger, 2010). Underpinning the capacity-building activities of these organizations in Africa is the normative assumption that vibrant media will lead to more democratic societies; "media development" therefore becomes "subject to particular cultural and even political preferences" (Berger, 2010, p. 552). More often than not, the "political preference" of non-state actors involved in the promotion of media ethics in Africa ("through conference, workshops and symposia," Mfumbusa, 2008, p. 143) has inclined toward liberalism, as these actors see the media as linked to individual rights and to a free market environment and encourage the professionalization of journalism. The codes developed for African democracies (e.g., in South Africa) are frequently influenced by notions of freedom and social responsibility derived from the global North (see Retief, 2002, p. 20; Wasserman, 2006). These values sometimes conflict with prevailing cultural norms, and the failure of African journalists

to comply with professional standards and norms is often lamented (Mfumbusa, 2008, pp. 141–142). Notions of "freedom" and "responsibility" are therefore contested within African media contexts, as noted in studies of journalists' perceptions of these central ethical values (Wasserman, 2010, 2011).

Conclusion

Despite the globalization of media and attempts to de-Westernize media studies, African perspectives on media theory remain limited. The inclusion of Africa into global media studies too often remains at the level of examples and case studies, and too seldom takes African experiences seriously at the level of theory. An example of how these power relations in media theories have played out can be found in the field of media ethics.

Recent attempts to chart the future of media ethics in a globalized environment have made strides in this regard. However, more needs to be done to unpack the nuances of the African experience in the realm of media ethics. African media ethics cannot be seen as a homogenous area. Media ethics in Africa remains a contested terrain, as media ethics scholars draw on divergent frameworks to argue for the optimal relation between media freedom and media responsibility in African democracies. This chapter identified the most prominent of these frameworks as the development journalism approach, the indigenization approach, and the professionalization and social responsibility approach. While the literature on media ethics in Africa has sometimes pitted northern-influenced frameworks of social responsibility and individualistic notions of freedom against indigenous approaches (e.g. Kasoma, 1996), other scholars suggested that affinities may be found between indigenous African philosophies and northern approaches like communitarianism (e.g. Christians, 2004), or they have accommodated the social responsibility concept within a broader framework of development journalism (e.g. Ogan, 1982). Empirical studies of African journalists' attitudes toward these frameworks have shown that the "watchdog" and "developmental" frameworks are, however, viewed as oppositional, but that notions of freedom and responsibility were at times contextualized to fit particular democratic circumstances (Wasserman, 2010, 2011). Development journalism and indigenization frameworks are often viewed with suspicion, as vehicles for new and subtle forms of pressure on freedom of speech. In everyday journalistic practice, ethics is the outcome of a process of negotiation between stakeholders in the media and their counterparts in the political sphere.

The lack of consensus about an African media ethical framework that Skjerdal (2012) points to suggests that it is impossible to speak of African, regional, or local ethics in any broad or monolithic manner. Historical and contemporary political, social, and cultural factors impact on how ethical frameworks are adopted and operationalized. Furthermore, the negotiation of ethical frameworks takes place not only internally, in African countries, but is also linked to cultural flows and

counterflows between Africa and the rest of the world, in a globalized media landscape. Influences from northern media ethics are adopted, adapted, and resisted in local contexts and take on new social and political meanings. More often than not, media ethics in Africa is "glocalized," as it is in other developing contexts (Wasserman & Rao, 2008). These complex processes fragment any simple or monolithic understanding of African ethics.

A global media ethics that seeks to incorporate perspectives from Africa would need to be cognizant of the full complexity of the discipline on this continent and in its various countries and regions, as well as of how media ethics is operationalized and interpreted in everyday journalistic practice. Dealing with high-level concepts or romanticized, essentialized notions of an "African ethics" will not help toward arriving at a global ethics that includes Africa. Instead a narrative approach – one that draws out the meaning-making processes around ethical concepts in order to engage in a critical dialogue with these ethical meanings – would be much more fruitful. Such an approach calls for a more ethnographic and empirical orientation to media ethics, one that would seek first to assess the attitudes and norms currently being negotiated in African settings and then to explore how these attitudes and norms articulate with various other ethical narratives in media settings in other parts of the world. Such a process would be a dynamic and open-ended one, which refuses to reify Africa as a static repository of indigenous knowledge ready to be appropriated in global discourses, but treats it rather as a terrain on which various ethical traditions and discourses continue to play out.

White (2010) argues for an empirical approach to normative ethics in Africa that should take its starting point not in theoretical abstractions but in an observation of journalists' reasoning. More work can be done to establish what motivates journalists in Africa and how they view their role in relation to their respective societies. By paying attention to the lived experiences of journalists and to the ways in which they adopt, adapt, and apply normative frameworks to their specific contexts, an African media ethics can be developed that does not rely on idealistic or romantic notions of "Africanness" but will be responsive to the actual conditions in which African journalists work – which may be very different from those of journalists in other parts of the world. What may be needed most is not to "find" an African media ethics, as if it were waiting somewhere outside of the dominant northern philosophies, pristine and ready to be "discovered" *in* Africa. Instead, media ethicists should listen more closely to the voices of journalists and scholars who discuss, contest, and engage with existing global ethical debates *from* the vantage point of their lived experience in African societies.

This approach to media ethics in Africa can also inform attempts to revisit media theory in the broader sense, to account for experiences and contexts outside the global North, in a globalized media landscape and in a time where the rapidly shifting global geopolitics and the "rise of the rest" are increasingly likely to render media theories historically oriented toward northern metropoles inadequate.

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43

The Efficacy of Censorship as a Response to Terrorism

Kasun Ubayasiri

Introduction

Censorship has long been a well-used part of media strategy in counter-terrorism, but its efficacy – particularly in a media environment being morphed and transmuted by digital technologies – remains contested. While it is inaccurate, and perhaps even arrogant, to claim that censorship is the best tool for muffling the voice of terrorism, it is equally erroneous to simply dismiss censorship as folly. In this context the present chapter discusses the efficacy of censorship as a response to terrorism in a sprawling contemporary media landscape.

Any discussion on the efficacy of censorship should feature three fundamental points: a clear conceptual framework of what constitutes censorship; a working definition of terrorism; and the purported strategic connection between terrorism and the media, on which rests the suggested need for media censorship as a counter-terrorist strategy.

In this context censorship is defined as the active withholding of information; hence both the overt censorship of media content by government and military officials and the hidden media censorship (which is equally widespread) through restrictions on access to information and information sources are considered under the broader definition of censorship. The Glasgow Media Group takes the discussion further and divides information control into four categories: public relations, self-censorship by the media, use of law and intimidation, and direct censorship (Miller, 1995, pp. 45–75). This chapter will focus mainly on the last two categories, which are discussed in relation to the purported strategic needs of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

The difficulty of reaching an all-encompassing definition of terrorism is well documented. However, terrorism, stripped of the definer's own political affiliations

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and viewed as an abstract politico-military strategy, can be broadly defined as the use of violence or threat of violence on a randomly selected group of victims in order to terrorize a wider target audience, in a bid to harness their psychological condition of terror to further the terrorists' own political objectives. Under this definition a terrorist strategy may be deployed by insurgents, in a bid to gain political control unavailable through traditional access to power, or by paramilitaries, militaries, and even governments, to sustain political control that they already enjoy to some extent; thus numerous species and subspecies of terrorism are created – such as subnational, transnational, and state terrorism. The complex and multi-faceted nature of terrorism and its tactical and strategic use of the media demand a wide range of counter-terrorism responses. To this end, the deployment of censorship or the muting of the terrorist message is an obvious counter-terrorism maneuver.

This chapter will examine the purported strategic needs of censorship within counter-terrorism and with its efficacy as a politico-military maneuver. It can then be argued that a counter-terrorist response also involves armed confrontations, as in the US-led "war on terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq, in the Sri Lankan government's military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and in Russia's Second Chechen War in 1999, after a series of apartment bombings in Moscow. The use of censorship as part of a counter-terrorist strategy cannot be discussed without referencing armed conflicts that deploy both conventional battlefield and counter-insurgency tactics.

The discussion will therefore be three-fold, dealing with the following topics:

1 the role of the media and the strategic efficacy of censorship in insurgent terrorism, which includes subnational and transnational actors attempting to *gain* political power;
2 the role of the media and the strategic efficacy of censorship in state terrorism, where terrorism is deployed to *sustain and strengthen* political power; and
3 the role of the media and the strategic efficacy of censorship in counter-terrorism.

While the categories may not be mutually exclusive, this chapter will limit its discussion to the strategic relationship between insurgent terrorism and counter-terrorism where the media and the efficacy of media censorship are a strategic *response* against terrorism – as opposed to their being a *tool* of terrorism, which is sometimes the case in state terrorism.

Finally, it must also be established on whose behalf, and for what, the censorship is effective. If terrorism is viewed as a strategic component of a larger politico-military conflict, then it can be argued that not all media content generated about the conflict may be of strategic use to terrorists, or that media coverage may exclusively benefit terrorism. Media coverage may serve a number of purposes, including furthering democratic dialogue in the greater theater of war, which in turn may be vital for resolving conflict through negotiations and peace processes.

Insurgent Terrorism and the Strategic Use of News Media

In July 1968 the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) pioneered the hijacking of aircraft when it successfully diverted an El Al plane en route from Rome to Tel Aviv and forced it to land in Algiers. Over the next two years the PFLP hijacked another dozen aircraft, including four in a single week in September 1970. The 1970 hijackings became a media sensation, the hostage takers holding a press conference for more than 60 journalists at the Dawson Air Field near Amman. Journalist Gerald Seymour later recalled:

> [in] 1970, it would have been believed that by foghorn statements, they [the PFLP] could convince the outside world – beyond the boundaries of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon – of the rightness of their cause … This today would seem to show a quite stunning naivety. It would seem to show almost a childlike innocence. (Seymour, 2006)[1]

PFLP founder Dr. George Habash later told the German magazine *Der Stern* of September 19, 1970:

> When we hijack a plane it has more effect than if we killed a hundred Israelis in battle … for decades world public opinion has been neither for nor against the Palestinians. It simply ignored us. At least the world is talking about us now. (Habash, quoted in Rineheart, 1977, p. 34)

The hijackings were a media spectacle, choreographed and stage-managed.

Three decades later, on September 11, 2001, 19 Al-Qaeda Takfiri terrorists would take control of four commercial airliners and wield them with deadly accuracy, to create what the German modernist composer Karlheinz Stockhausen described as "Lucifer's greatest work of art" (Stockhausen, 2001; Harris, 2004, p. 4).

Stockhausen's characterization yields a notion of "terrorism as theatre" – macabre and inhumane, yet theatrical in its strategic choreography and in its need for an audience. The argument is simple: the PFLP hijackings and the Al-Qaeda attacks were not simply attacks on the individuals affected by the immediate violence, but performances for a wider audience. Cowen points out that spectacle plays a significant role in politics. "President Bush, after the initial military fall of Saddam's forces, strode confidently on an aircraft carrier boasting of his victory to the American public. Presidential inaugurations have become increasingly ornate, multi-day public events" (Cowen, 2006, p. 234).

The "theatrics" of PFLP and Al-Qaeda; the September 1972 massacre of 11 Israeli athletes by the Palestinian Black September Organization (BSO) in the Munich Olympic village; the October 2002 siege of the Moscow theater Dubrovska during a performance of the musical *Nord-Ost*; the September 2004 massacre of the Beslan school by Chechen terrorists in Russia; the March 2004 bombings of the Madrid underground; and the July 2005 bombings of the London underground – all these are a metaphorical snapping of fingers designed to draw the attention of disparate and distracted audiences, to force their undivided attention to the terrorists' message.

Paul Wilkinson argues that violence is certainly not "speechless" and that "all serious terrorist campaigns are characterized by frenetic use of every available access to the mass media" (Wilkinson, 1989, p. 7). The terrorists' desire for a spot in the evening news is further explored by Frederick Hacker, who argues that acts of aggression are in theory dyadic relationships demanding two participants – an *aggressor* and a *victim* – but in the case of terrorist aggression the relationship is fundamentally triadic, in that it demands not only a perpetrator and a victim, but also an *observer*. Hacker also argues that the observer in this triad is vital: the terrorist action is predominantly staged so as to produce a behavioral effect in the observer (Hacker, 1981, p. 73).

In theory, the terrorist is able to terrify a target population through selected attacks on segments of that population – the victims of terrorist violence. The aim is to induce psychosis through fear among the wider target population. Fear and insecurity bordering on psychosis are strategically expected to erode the target population's confidence in the incumbent government and its ability to provide stability and security. This erosion of confidence in the presence of perceived terror caused by a terrorist attack that is random, persistent, and imminent results in increased pressure on the incumbent regime to accommodate the terrorists' demands. Terrorism, defined theoretically, is therefore the harnessing of terror as a psychological tool to achieve strategic advantages in political power struggles. In the case of state-sponsored terrorism, this same psychological control is harnessed to command compliance and to stamp out resistance against the incumbent regime.

Therefore the system of power relations that terrorism involves can be represented as a tetrad, which expands Hacker's original triad – *aggressor* (terrorist), *victim*, and *observer* (the target population) – through the addition of a fourth component: *political decision maker*. In its most basic form, the use of news media in terrorist strategy is designed to inform unaffected members of the target population of the terrorist attack, to justify the violence as a consequence of behaviors perpetrated by the government this population supports, and to offer this same population a way of mitigating the imminent terrorist threat through political compliance.

The Nuances of the Terrorist Narrative: "Hostile" Audiences and "Sympathetic" Audiences

Crelinsten (1987) argues that terrorism is based on a communication model where the act of violence is merely a "symbolic" deed – hence the often quoted explanation of a terrorist act as "propaganda by deed." Through the initial act of violence the terrorist maintains the audience's attention long enough to send a more specific message, with wider strategic implications. Crelinsten's argument suggests a duality of the terrorist message: an initial message of "terror," which is crude and made to draw attention, and (arguably) a more sophisticated message after it, one with greater strategic implications for the terrorists' political agenda.

In his analysis of this sophisticated terrorist message, Maurice Tugwell, paratrooper turned British army's top propaganda man in Northern Ireland, argues that revolutionary propaganda focuses on three main themes in order to justify the use of violence: the virtues of the revolution, which acts for the greater good of the people; the evil of the regime, which stands between the people and the "promised land"; and the revolution's inevitable victory (Tugwell, 1986, p. 6). Tugwell also presents the notion of guilt transfer and spurious justification, a mechanism through which an uncompromising government policy is blamed for the terrorist violence – as illustrated by Chechen terrorist leader Samil Basayev's justification of the September 2004 Beslan school massacre. Assuming responsibility for a number of terrorist attacks in Russia – including the Beslan school hostage crisis, in which 380 adults and children were killed – Basayev blamed the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, for the "terrible tragedy." A few days after the attack, he wrote on the pro-rebel web site Kavkazcenter.com: "Kremlin vampire destroyed and injured 1,000 children and adults, giving the order to storm the school for the sake of his imperial ambitions and preserving his own throne" (Dougherty, 2004).

While the terrorist narratives outlined by Tugwell (1986, p.10) clearly demonstrate an "oppose us and you will die" message intended for the target population – which is in essence hostile toward the terrorists' greater strategic goals and supportive of the incumbent regime – it can be argued that the nuanced message of terror is also directed at the terrorists' existing and potential supporter base, for which they purportedly fight – a supportive audience, sympathetic to their sociopolitical aspirations. In this context an ethno-nationalist terrorist group such as the Tamil Tigers, which fought to secure a Tamil state separate from the Sinhala-dominated island of Sri Lanka, may attempt to galvanize its own support base within the Tamil community (likely to be a "sympathetic" audience), to generate greater global awareness of the conflict, and to garner sympathy from the international community (an arguably "neutral" audience) – all this while terrorizing the Sri Lankan government's Sinhala voter base (a potentially "hostile" audience).

It can then be argued that spurious justifications and reference to strategic objectives play a vital communicative role in legitimizing the terrorist position within a wider sociopolitical struggle, which encompasses terrorist militancy. If militancy and armed resistance are viewed as a response to marginalization or perceived marginalization, then the narratives of spurious justification focus on rationalizing terrorist action by presenting it as a response to an even greater injustice, committed by the regime – the "oppressor." In rationalizing militancy, the terrorist attempts to generate sympathy and to consolidate its legitimacy within its supporter base.

In this context the narratives focus on presenting the terrorists as the only true representatives of the oppressed or wronged population they represent, their violence as justified retaliation against an initial injustice, and their sacrifice as martyrdom for the greater good.

This struggle for legitimacy is discussed by numerous scholars – including Tuman (2010, p. 21), who notes the following statement in the original Irish Republican Army's (IRA) recruitment manual, *The Green Book*: "The Irish Republican Army, as the legal representatives of the Irish people, are morally justified in carrying out a campaign of resistance against foreign occupation forces and domestic collaborators."

A rudimentary analysis of the terrorists' sophisticated message suggests that it is directed toward two major audiences and carries two divergent messages: there is a message to the target "hostile" audience represented by the incumbent regime and its voter base, and this message suggests the invincibility of the insurgency and the futility of resisting the terrorists; and there is a message to a "sympathetic" audience – the insurgent terrorists' potential supporter base – highlighting the nature of the sacrifice and the legitimacy of the struggle.

Both messages have strategic implications. Therefore it is reasonable that any robust counter-terrorism strategy would attempt to block delivery of these messages via censorship.

The terrorist relationship with the "neutral" international audience, which in most cases focuses on generating greater sympathy for the cause through a series of complex strategies of politics and communication, falls outside the direct scope of this chapter.

An Argument for Censorship: Unplugging the Terror Message

If terrorist media strategy has two components – a "crude," fear-generating message and a more sophisticated secondary message of rationalization, which gives meaning to the terror and harnesses psycho-political fear – then either message could be censored to mitigate the impact of terrorist violence. This idea has fuelled much of the debate on media censorship.

A month before the much publicized kidnapping of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades, Marshall McLuhan told the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo*: "Without communication, there would be no terrorism. There could be bombs, there could be hardware, but the new terrorism is software, it is electronic. Therefore, without electronics, no terrorism" (Marconi, 2005). In the aftermath of the kidnapping, McLuhan was in favor of media censorship, suggesting the need for "pulling out the plugs" on the Red Brigades (Schlesinger & Lumley, 1985, p. 338). McLuhan's ideological vantage point is fashioned along his wider view of the media, in particular the doctrine encapsulated by his much quoted phrase "the medium is the message," which posits that the relationship between the medium and the message is irrevocably fused and that the medium influences how the message is perceived. For McLuhan, it is not the media content of terrorism that is important, but the medium of delivery. In the case of television, it is the viewing of terrorist

violence on the evening news within the confines of an average living room that has the greater social impact.

Alexander (1978) argues that, through excessive news coverage, "establishment" communication channels willingly or unwillingly become tools in the terrorist strategy. Similarly, Alexander and O'Day argue, perhaps controversially, that "by providing extensive coverage of incidents the media give the impression that they sympathize with the terrorist cause, thereby creating a clime congenial to future violence" (Alexander & O'Day, 1984, p. 146). Baudrillard is equally convinced of the media playing a role in terrorism. He writes:

> Mogadishu-Stammheim: the media make themselves into the vehicle of the moral condemnation of terrorism and the exploitation of fear for political ends, but simultaneously, in the most complete ambiguity, they propagate the brutal charm of the terrorist act, they are themselves terrorists, insofar as they themselves march to the tune of seduction. (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 84)

Following this assumed synergy between the terrorists and the media to its seemingly obvious conclusion, media restrictions become ostensibly inevitable – or, as McLuhan says, it becomes necessary to "pull out the plugs," and numerous government polices have been drafted on this principle.

When the NBC (National Broadcasting Company), in May 1986, interviewed Abul "Mohammed" Addas, the head of the Palestinian Liberation Front, which hijacked the *Achille Lauro* in 1985, US State Department spokesman Charles Redman said: "Terrorism thrives on this kind of publicity … [it] encourages the terrorist activities we're all seeking to deter" (Redman, quoted in Picard, 1986, p. 386). Similarly the British Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, attempted to prevent the broadcast of a BBC interview with Martin McGuinness,[2] an IRA spokesman, while Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is on record for saying that the media "must find a way to starve the terrorists and hijackers of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend" (Cottle, 2006, p. 144). Following an interview with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on *60 Minutes*, Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, charged the press with "catering to the enemies of this country" and said: "There ought to be some way to control the press – the press in this country should be controlled" (Terrell & Ross, 1991, p. 88).

These politically motivated calls for censorship rarely appreciate the nuanced nature of the militant terrorist narrative and merely suggest crude censorship of all militant voice – which is an impossible and, at times, counterproductive task. In this context Susan Carruthers argues: "censorship, the active withholding of information, constitutes the state's most blunt implement, and as such one to be wielded with discretion" (Carruthers, 2011, p. 7). The dilemma of censorship is largely due to two major impediments: the physical difficulty of effectively censoring media content in a sprawling media landscape, and the unpredictable ramifications of censorship in democratic society.

Pro-Terrorist Media: The Hydra Head of Satellite Media Outlets

Any discussion of media censorship must focus on two fundamental categories of media: the purportedly independent mainstream media, which may "inadvertently" further terrorist strategy; and pro-insurgent media, deliberately designed and controlled by the insurgents to further their strategic interest.

Mao Zedong's three-phase politico-military approach to revolution – strategic defensive, stalemate, and offensive – clearly outlines the role of propaganda in revolution (US Department of the Army, 2007). In the first stage (strategic defensive), the guerrilla is encouraged to move among the people as a fish swims in the sea, while propaganda is used to generate a support base for the guerrilla among the wider population. Mao wrote: "propaganda materials are very important. Every large guerrilla unit should have a printing press and a mimeograph stone. They must also have paper on which to print propaganda leaflets and notices" (Zedong, 2009, p. 41; see also Zedong, 1937). By contrast, the military doctrine of counter-insurgency emphasizes the need to "drain the water" in order to isolate the insurgent, as was the case with USA's military strategy in South Vietnam. Similarly, counter-terrorism *media* strategy is to isolate the militant terrorists from their *audience* of supporters.

More than half a century after Mao, there is no doubt that many insurgent terrorist groups have significantly invested in enhancing their own media capabilities, largely to communicate with their support base and to maintain momentum for the greater sociopolitical conflict that fuels their armed militancy. Access to commercial satellite technology and to the Internet has revolutionized how militant groups communicate with their audiences, be they sympathetic, neutral, or hostile.

In the Middle East the "terrorist" media landscape is arguably dominated by the Lebanese militant group Hizbolla. Conway claims that "autonomous communication has long been a paramount objective for Hizbollah" (Conway, 2007, p. 402), and the group has expanded its media assets since the first publication of its weekly newspaper *Al Ahed* (*The Pledge*) on June 13, 1984 – which was followed by the weeklies *Al Bilad*, *Al Wahda*, *El Ismailya*, and the monthly *Al Sabil*. In 1988 Hizbollah launched its own radio station Al Nour (The Light). Hizbolla's own television, Al Manar, was launched in June 1989 broadcasting Ayatollah Khomeini's funeral (Conway, 2007, p. 402). In April 2000 Al Manar was given approval to launch satellite transmissions.

In December 2004 Al Manar was placed on an "exclusion list" by the US State Department and was subsequently designated a terrorist organization in March 2006, which effectively banned its transmission in the US. The channel was banned the same month by the French courts for inciting racial hatred; then it was banned in Germany in 2008. Voluntary exclusion by satellite providers and licensing restrictions have also seen the channel disappear from Dutch and Canadian satellite television, while a Spanish retransmission ban on Hispasat (a group of

communication satellites) has made it inaccessible in South America. Despite significant bans and restrictions, Al Manar is still available in the Middle East, parts of Europe, and North Africa via Nilesat, largely owned by the Egyptian government, and Arabsat, owned in part by the Saudi Arabian government. However, Conway argues that the bans have had little impact, as "the station has all but entirely circumvented the satellite bans by providing free continuous live streaming online" (Conway, 2008, p. 13), essentially proving the inability to fully censor the media.

In June 2010 the French government banned the purportedly Hamas-backed Al Aqsa television broadcasts, claiming that the channel incited hatred and promoted terrorism. The French ban resulted in Al Aqsa loosing access to its carrier, the Paris-based Eutelsat satellite company; but Al Aqsa managed to resume broadcasts after reaching an agreement with the Kuwait-based Gulfsat. The new satellite also enabled Al Aqsa to reach East Asian, Afghan, and Pakistani audiences that it was unable to reach through its Eutelsat service. Both Al Manar and Al Aqsa provide anti-Israeli political content and are based on their respective political positions of resistance against Israeli intervention in the region. Outside of the satellite television sphere Hamas has also successfully exploited cybertechnologies for distributing media content, including video sharing sites fashioned on YouTube – namely PaluTube, TubeZik, and the now defunct Aqsatube.

The primary strategic role of pro-rebel media such as Al Manar and Al Aqsa is to build greater communication pathways between the organization and its supporter base, which includes geographically dispersed diaspora communities whose support remains central to the conflict. The communication networks are in turn harnessed to further financial networks, to attract new recruits, and to sustain ideological cohesiveness among the supporter base. Their ability to bypass censorship simply by finding a new carrier demonstrates the futility of national censorship regulations when it comes to silencing transnational satellite communication.

Censorship in the Cybersphere

Conway claims that more than half of the 30 groups that the US designated as (FTOs) were already operating web sites by 1998, and by 2005 "virtually every known terrorist group … [had] an online presence, and many groups are the subjects of more than one site" (Conway, 2005, p. 4).

Gabriel Weimann (2008) noted that Al-Qaeda was operating around 5,600 web sites, "900 more … appearing each year." Weimann argues:

> since the September 11 attacks, al-Qa'ida [*sic*] has saturated its websites with a string of announcements of an impending major attack on US targets. These warnings have received considerable media coverage, helping to create a sense of insecurity among audiences throughout the world and especially within the United States. Al-Qa'ida itself has repeatedly stated on jihadist websites that the 9/11 attacks not only inflicted concrete damage to the US economy, but also psychological damage.

The Al Qaeda web sites perform a dual strategic role. The predominantly Arabic web sites unite the sympathetic audiences of geographically dispersed global Takfiri jihadists and their potential supporters under the cohesive banner of Al Qaeda (the base). These web sites, monitored and translated by mainstream media and counter-terrorism analysts in the blogosphere, also continue to terrorize "Western" media audiences by presenting the impression of a cohesive and omnipresent threat of a global Al Qaeda with little or no military investment.

It can be argued that the plethora of terrorist web sites is indicative of the futility of censorship in the digital age. Rogers (2009) challenges the notion of web censorship, arguing against the view of the web as a set of discrete and censorable sites and presenting it instead as a "circulation space" where information is constantly fragmented and duplicated.

> The information on sites that are censored may be syndicated, and fed by RSS, or it may have been scraped, in an automated or semi-automated form of copying and pasting … snippets of censored content may also have been grabbed, and subsequently annotated, commented on … (Rogers, 2009, p. 229)

He argues that the web treats censorship as a malfunction and routes around it.

Underscoring this argument, Dubowitz (2009) cites the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs reports, which claims that Al Qaeda's media wing As-Sahab

> leverages its products through Internet "clearinghouses," which act as middlemen in distributing terrorist media to "mirror sites." One example is the al-Fajr Media Center, established in 2006, which operates almost entirely virtually. Al-Fajr… moves as-Sahab's content to pre-selected sites. From there, the videos go viral, "mirrored" to popular Western websites such as Archive.com and YouTube, and then to hundreds or perhaps thousands more websites.

Any attempt at censoring such a multi-armed media-producing organization would be problematic at best and requires tactics well beyond filters or denial of service (DoS) attacks.

Weimann (2008) posits that many terrorist organizations have now turned to the Internet as a result of asymmetric media coverage or what Hammond (2003) calls "media war on terrorism," confident in the knowledge that, if orchestrated well, their message is virtually uncensorable.

On December 17, 1996 Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) seized the Japanese embassy in Lima, Peru, taking 600 hundred high-profile Japanese diplomats hostage. The following morning Túpac Amaru launched a multipage web site via laptop and satellite telephone uplink through a German host. Mainstream newspapers, including the *New York Times*, relied on the terrorists' web site for information. Denning (2009, p. 195) argues that, "during the initial hours of the conflict, the terrorists effectively owned the information environment relating to their operation." Dartnell notes that Túpac Amaru's Japanese embassy takeover, which lasted four

months, also launched a barrage of web-based media highlighting social injustice, poor human rights records, and the incompetence of the Alberto Fujimori government. Dartnell claims that the global web campaign was conducted not by the "guerrillas" but by "supporters and sympathizers" in San Diego, California and Toronto, Canada. He further argues that, while the Peruvian government was successful in storming the embassy, Túpac Amaru and its supporters were able to turn the global spotlight on a small South American nation through a successful web campaign. Túpac Amaru's geographically dispersed media campaign lacked even an overt central command structure (Dartnell, 2009, pp. 64–65); from a censorship perspective, there was no "McLuhanesque" plug to pull, despite the protracted nature of the hostage crisis.

In the spirit of the discussion on the efficacy of censorship, it must be noted that the Túpac Amaru hostage crisis and the cybermedia campaign were staged amid the Fujimori government's tough media censorship campaign and against the backdrop of a 1988 decree banning guerrilla propaganda. The Index for Censorship reports that, when Fujimori announced the suspension of the Peruvian constitution and closure of the congress in April 1992, the military had already occupied the offices of local and foreign media (Strong & Harding, 1992). The Fujimori government, which came into power at a time when much of Peru was under the Maoist guerrilla control of Túpac Amaru and of Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path"), imposed media censorship as part of an arsenal of politico-strategic moves to eradicate terrorism. It can even be argued that the Túpac Amaru hostage takeover, as a tactical maneuver, was designed as a high-profile terrorist event in order to attract and direct media attention to a media theater that was choking under severe censorship. It can be argued that, in this instance, media censorship and the curtailing of public sphere dialogue, actually accelerated hostilities as democracy and open dialogue eroded in an already volatile political theatre.

The Fujimori government's media censorship may also be presented as a classic example of how corrupt political regimes may use media censorship, imposed under the guise of counter-terrorism, to control media criticism of a government's ineptitude and corruption. Gerrits notes the media may provide insurgent terrorists with a good dose of the "oxygen of publicity," but censorship can provide a government with the "narcotic of secrecy," which is an even greater danger to democracy (Gerrits, 1992, p. 60).

Gagging the Fourth Estate: Freedom of Speech, Democracy and Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism expert Paul Wilkinson notes:

> It is widely recognised that it is important to avoid the mass media being hijacked and manipulated by terrorists, but if the freedom of the media is sacrificed in the name of combating terrorism one has allowed small groups of terrorists to destroy one of the key foundations of a democratic society. Censorship, in whatever guise, plays into the hands of enemies of democracy. (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 156)

Having seemingly argued against censorship, Wilkinson then claims that "in any free and responsible society no freedom of expression is totally unlimited," outlining the need for responsible media that self-regulate.

Wilkinson's interpretations of the freedoms and responsibilities of the press are in line with the socially responsible journalism outlined in normative theories of the press. In one of the earliest works on the subject, Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) present four categories of the press, articulated by authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet Communist principles respectively. While authoritarian press models advocate the media's subservience to state policy, libertarian press models advocate free and independent media that, together, function as a "fourth estate" watchdog primarily concerned with safeguarding the freedom and liberty of the individual. As a derivative from this libertarian press model, social responsibility theory suggests that the great power wielded by the independent press must be tempered through social responsibility, as in the case of self-restraint in covering volatile terrorist events.

Within the context of a terrorist communication strategy, it has already been established that violence (as has already been said here) is merely a snapping of the fingers designed to draw attention to a more complex sociopolitical narrative. A press that is uncensored will report on violence and will interpret the reasoning behind it, thus furthering the terrorists' media strategy, while attempts to censor the press will erode the free press, which is a vital commodity in a democratic society: such is the nature of the censorship dilemma.

Opponents of censorship, too, note the risk involved by censorship's ability to erode democracy. Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham argued: "The liberty of the press has its inconveniences; nevertheless, the evils which result from it are not to be compared to those of a censorship." Basing his argument on the human limitation of the censor and on the possibility of self-interest and malice, Bentham observed that censorship impedes the "progress of the human mind" (Bentham, 1975, p. 228). Stephen Holmes notes: "By the eighteenth century, the truth-generating capacity of uncensored debates had become a standard rationale for the freedom of the press" (Holmes, 1990, p. 30). He further quotes the eighteenth-century author Anne Louise Germaine de Staël – the famous Madame de Staël – who conceded that political newspapers were problematic, but argued that "if, to maintain its power, [the government] had gagged adversaries and granted freedom of the press to its friends alone, representative government would have been destroyed" (Holmes, 1990, p. 30).

In 1971 a court injunction imposed by the Nixon government on the *New York Times*' publication of the Pentagon Papers led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling that, while conceding the validity of censorship in some instances, upheld the public's democratic "right to know" the deeply embarrassing content of the documents, which outlined policy failures during the Vietnam War (Geer, Schiller, & Segal, 2012, p. 213).

While politically motivated calls for censorship remain crude and overbearing, contemporary regulatory media frameworks are increasingly used for the more

specific and surgical removal of offensive content that purportedly glorifies terrorism, incites violence, and disseminates ethnically motivated hate speech, ultimately presenting censorship in a more nuanced and palatable fashion.

But Canadian writer Stefan Braun notes the difficulty of establishing non-culture-specific definitions and demarcations of "politically offensive" media content. Basing his argument on hate speech, he states: "silencing hate is a politically slippery slope and a double-edged social sword. It can move in unintended or unexpected ways, descending and expanding the legal boundaries originally set for it" (Braun, 2004, p. 256). He further argues that "hate censorship is intrinsically unworkable. It cannot do for the progressive cause what the hate censors want and expect it to do – delegitimate the messenger and depoliticize his message" (p. 259). Thinking of the Canadian censorship of anti-Semitic hate speeches, Braun notes that censorship reinforces stereotypes and feeds the perception of injustice, which is at the root of hate speech. "Nothing lends public credibility to conspiracy theories of Jewish power, domination and media control quite like 'successful' Jewish demonstrations of 'free speech for me but not for thee'; in the minds of the already suspicious and impressionable" (Braun, 2009). Braun also argues that overt censorship of hate speech gags discussion and merely drives the hate underground or allows it to morph and "mutate into more insidious, less easily challengeable, strains."[3]

The culture-specific character of defining expressions such as "glorifying terrorism" and "inciting violence" is famously demonstrated in the case of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC). The US enacted laws as late as 2008 to finally remove Mandela and other ANC leaders from the US terror watch list, which restricted their entry into the US (Hall, 2008). Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had called the restrictions a "rather embarrassing matter that I still have to waive in my own counterpart, the foreign minister of South Africa, not to mention the great leader Nelson Mandela" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2008). Theoretically, until the watch list was altered, praise or support of Mandela was challengeable under law as a "glorification of terrorism."

Censoring Dissent: Terrorist News or Minority Voice?

While terrorism as a military strategy of targeting noncombatants cannot be condoned, it must be noted that insurgency in a wider armed conflict may be born out of injustices or perceived injustices that have polarized communities to the point of militarization, thus the successful resolution of insurgent terrorism must not only focus on militarily countering the insurgency, but – perhaps more importantly – on addressing the underlying or perceived injustice.

In these ongoing conflicts encompassing terrorist strategy, there is a difficulty in demarcating between "illegitimate" militant narratives and "legitimate" socio-political analysis and dialogue.

In politically charged political theaters it is not unreasonable to assume that disparate and unaffiliated groups may share ideological niches or synergies through

their collective thinking, and in consequence various "ethno-nationalist" media may support the greater political cause of a militant group without *overtly* endorsing the terrorist violence.

In one such example, the allegedly LTTE- (Tamil Tiger-) backed Tamilnet cybernews agency, while denying that it was financed and backed by the Tigers, shared LTTE's vision of Eelam – a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east of Sinhala-dominated Sri Lanka. Tamilnet editor Dharmeratnam Sivaram often asserted: "if Tamilnet is the same as the LTTE let the Sinhalese be damned" (personal communication, 2005). Sivaram was unapologetic about his political position and argued that Tamilnet and the LTTE were mutually exclusive organizations campaigning for the same cause – greater autonomy for the Tamil people.

Tamilnet, which is banned as a terrorist news web site in Sri Lanka, serves a vital role in nurturing contemporary Tamil nationalist identity. Maya Ranganathan notes how web sites such as Tamilnet sustain Tamil nationalist "imagining" through their daily delivery of information, which is distinct from the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lankan mainstream news voice. While the civil war raged, it was argued that the web site coverage deliberately emphasized a division, playing a crucial part in sustaining a political climate conducive to the LTTE armed struggle; it was also argued that the web site provided the only news voice of the Tamils in the then Tiger-held north and east. In one such example, after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, Tamilnet provided the only detailed coverage of the eastern seaboard of Sri Lanka affected by the tsunami. Following the fall of the LTTE Tamilnet has continued to champion Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka, and in most cases it is the only news service dedicated to covering the situation in the now "liberated" north and east; for this reason it remains a vital media player in the post-war political theater.

A similar difficulty in differentiating between nationalist and pro-terrorist media presents itself in the case of foreign-based Kurdish satellite television, which arguably serves a vital communicative role for minority Kurds living in Turkey.

Turkey lifted restrictions on Kurdish-language media in 2004, when the state broadcaster TRT (Turkish Radio Television) aired Kurdish-language programs for the first time since the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The bans and restrictions on the Kurdish language were a result of forcible assimilations of Kurds into the Turkish national fold.

These Kurdish programs were limited to about 30 minutes of documentaries and news each week, until the government's first 24-hour Kurdish-language TV station, TRT-6, was launched in January 2009. In the decade prior to the birth of TRT-6, a number of foreign-based Kurdish-language television channels transmitted programs into Turkey via various commercial satellites; these channels included Med TV, Medya TV, and Roj TV. However, each came under fire from Turkish authorities for allegedly supporting a designated terrorist group: the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The London-based Med TV license was revoked in April 1999 by the British Independent Television Commission (ITC),

after the broadcaster repeatedly violated ITC demands to end airing inflammatory statements that encouraged acts of violence in Turkey. The channel then emerged as Medya TV transmitting from Belgian studios via a French satellite in July 1999, until the French licensing authority again revoked its license. The satellite channel then emerged in 2004 as Roj TV, transmitting via satellite from Denmark. This channel has remained popular among Turkey's 18 million Kurds and significant Kurdish diaspora. However, the Turkish government maintains that Roj TV is a PKK organ and on this grounds has campaigned to ban the satellite channel in Europe.

On January 10, 2012 the Copenhagen City Court ruled that, between February 2008 and September 2010, Roj TV had "one-sidedly and uncritically disseminated [Kurdistan Workers' Party] messages, including incitement to revolt and to join the organization" (Ag, 2012). While the channel was fined, it was not banned by the Danish court – the ruling is under judicial appeal. On January 19, Eutelsat announced its decision "to suspend the presence of Roj TV on its satellites in order to avoid incurring criminal liability as an accomplice to terrorist activities" (Eutelesat Communications, 2012). The pro-Kurdish ekurd.net web site reported that Roj TV had secured a new satellite carrier, Intelsat 10–02, as of January 27, 2012.

Once again, Roj TV's circumvention of restrictions and bans suggests the uncensorable nature of commercial global media, but it also presents an interesting dimension to the discussion over Roj TV's role as a generator of Kurdish news. Danish journalist Magnus Ag states that banning Roj TV "would not only shoot down one of the Kurds' main sources of information. It would increase the likelihood that other minority media will face similar charges" (Ag, 2012). Ag's report, published by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), cites Roj TV's defence lawyer, Bjørn Elmquist, claiming that the footage presented in court was only 0.003 percent of the channel's total broadcast over a two-year period and was cherry picked by the prosecution. Ag claims that the defence was not given an opportunity to present the true diversity of the channel's media content.

The argument here is that television stations such as Roj TV serve a vital communicative role by presenting information to ethnic minorities in their own language, when few or no other media give their side of the story. Magnus Ag argues that this news voice is essential for opening an alternative perspective within the Turkish-centric media landscape. The argument is, then, that censorship of channels such as Roj TV is detrimental to the wider media landscape, where the ban would merely silence competing minority narratives in favor of the dominant media narrative.

Turkey's determination to maintain a dominant media narrative is illustrated through what can only be described as its latest effort to censor an independent Kurdish voice. While the ban on Kurdish-language media has been lifted, Kurdish journalists in Turkey operate under severe restrictions. Their access to news events and political figures is often restricted, and those who produce content opposed to

the mainstream Turkish dialogue are targeted and accused of aligning with the terrorists nd thus allowing the authorities to use terrorism legislation to silence Kurdish dissent in the media.

In December 2011 Turkish police detained dozens of people, including 38 journalists. Human Rights Watch researcher Emma Sinclair-Webb was quoted by the CNN saying: "It basically looks like all pro-Kurdish media … have been targeted in this operation" (Watson & Comert, 2011).

The long-term ramifications of the widespread censorship of Kurdish media and the silencing of Kurdish journalists are untested and unpredictable; they may even further alienate the Kurdish people, pushing them further toward the PKK. The irony is, that by failing to give Kurds an *independent* voice within a mainstream Turkish media structure, operations like Roj TV continue to enjoy an unrivalled position as the only voice of the Kurds.

Conclusion

A discussion on the efficacy of censorship as a response to terrorism, as outlined earlier, presents two fundamental problems: the difficulty of physically censoring information in a fragmented media landscape where insurgent terrorists have wide access to commercial communication satellite technologies and cyberpublishing; and issues surrounding the legitimacy of censorship and its implications for democracy and open dialogue. The latter concern undermines the efficacy of censorship even when physical censorship is successful in impeding the flow of strategic communication, as it threatens to erode democracy in a way the terrorists themselves never could, and to alienate disenfranchised minorities still further, which merely adds credence to the terrorists' legitimacy as a voice of the voiceless.

It can be argued that, within the social system of communication, information will either flow through alternative routes, bypassing censorship barricades, or the barricades themselves will result in unpredictable sociopolitical outcomes.

Censorship is, then, at best, a pedestrian and uninspired tactic that manages with moderate success to impede terrorist messages but fails to appreciate its own limitations, with potentially detrimental impact on the greater sociopolitical theater. This suggests, therefore, a real need for alternative media strategies in a counter-terrorism campaign. While a detailed discussion of these techniques is beyond the scope of this chapter, it must be noted that many counter-terrorism theorists have already outlined numerous alternatives to censorship.

Bruno Frey (1999) presents an alternative to overt censorship that could more effectively disrupt the terrorist narrative. As terrorist violence demands the recognition of an injustice or perceived injustice presented as the cause of terrorism, Frey argues the possibility of diffusing the strength of the message by attributing the violence to a number of possible terrorist groups with competing narratives. He argues that, "even when it seems obvious what terrorist group is involved, the police can never be sure because it may be a politically opposed group who has

committed the act in order to incriminate the 'obvious' group" (Frey, 1999, p. 101). In the case of purported Al Qaeda terrorism, a similar strategy can be adopted by specifically naming a number of Takfiri terrorist groups related to the geographic theater of violence, without evoking Al Qaeda; and by citing the culpability of a number of possible Takfiri terrorist groups. Naming Kashmiri's Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Pakistan's Jaish-e-Mohammed localizes the conflict and undermines the Al Qaeda narrative of omnipresence.

Frey and Luechinger (2008, p. 107) also argue for the need "to raise the relative costs of terrorism by lowering the costs of non-violent means for pursuing political goals." While the argument may seem somewhat over-simplistic, it can be argued that, within the media framework, media could frame discussions of actual and perceived sociopolitical marginalization through moderate news actors, while silencing the terrorist voice.

Basing their discussion on Hamas, web media academics Mozes and Weimann (2010) note similarities between commercial e-marketing strategies and Hamas web content and suggest the possibility of constructing competing marketing strategies to market rival ideologies – a consumer, market-inspired, subtle strategic maneuver where the brute force of bans and censorship has failed.

Indian political analyst Bahukutumbi Raman notes the importance of "counter-terrorism" instead of "combating terrorism" and a "campaign against terrorism" instead of "war against terrorism" in the contemporary political landscape. Counter-terrorism in the media sphere should be characterized not by censorship, but by open dialogue challenging and debating notions such as spurious justification; greater diversity of alternative and moderate news voices in the media; and a robust challenging of the *actual* terror threat. The media challenge of counter-terrorism is not, then, seeking better methods of censorship but finding alternative and more effective models of communication.

Notes

1 The hijacking also tested the West's resolve against terrorism when Britain agreed to free Leila Khaled along with six other Palestinian guerrillas held in Switzerland and Germany, despite its commitment to the United Nations 1963 Tokyo International Convention on Hijacking. Speaking to UK Confidential decades later, Leila Khaled admitted that the PFLP was encouraged by UK's capitulation to its demands. "The success in the tactics of the hijacking and imposing our demands and succeeding in having our demands implemented gave us the courage and the confidence to go ahead with our struggle," she said (BBC, January 1, 2001).

2 The interview was part of BBC documentary *Real Lives: At the Edge of the Union*.

3 Stefancic and Delgado (1997, p. 124) contest Braun's argument, claiming: "all but a small group of extremists accept some regulation, agreeing that such regulation is a step toward restoring and maintaining racial harmony. The sole exceptions are two countries with long histories of racial or ethnic oppression, South Africa and Sri Lanka, where censoring hate speech does seem to increase the incidence of ethnic hatred."

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44

Blending East–West Philosophies to Meta-Theorize Mediatization and Revise the News Paradigm

Shelton A. Gunaratne

Foreword

My current thinking on global communication (Gunaratne, 2002; 2005c), systems theories (Gunaratne, 2003; 2004b; 2007a; 2008b), world-systems analysis (Gunaratne, 2001b; 2002; 2007b), globalization (Gunaratne, 2006a; 2009c), mediatization (Gunaratne, 2012b), informatization (Gunaratne, 2001a; and here see also Ito, 2009) and other interconnected and interdependent concepts (Gunaratne, 2005b) evolved over the last 15 years (1998–2013), after the onset of the digital revolution in the 1980s. The 30 or more journal articles, chapters, books, and monographs I wrote during this compressed time might give the reader the impression that I have been groping in the dark until I hit upon the idea of globalization (Gunaratne, 2009c) and de-Westernization (Gunaratne, 2008a; 2010b).

I obtained my doctorate in mass communication from the University of Minnesota in 1972; but, sooth to say, late in my career I got disenchanted with the American and generally Western philosophical framework that guided academic discourse at American universities. The aim of the doctoral program was to train the students to think and act like scientists and to revere the scientific method willy-nilly. The pitfalls of trying to apply the methods of physical and biological sciences to behavioral and social sciences – which produced a spurious "scientism" (Hayek, 1942; Wallerstein, 2006), not science – rarely came under discussion. Mass communication gurus knew very little about Eastern philosophies or the sociocultural ways of the people who inhabited the Eastern or the non-Western hemisphere.

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At that stage Raymond Nixon, my mentor in international communication, drew my attention to the seminal work of anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1966), the father of proxemics, which helped me to understand the significance of cultural space from an American perspective. Although American universities offered numerous courses in intercultural and international communication, their aim invariably seemed to be to perpetuate Western, and more particularly American universalism. As demonstrated by the classic *Four Theories of the Press* – by Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, and first published in 1956 – American gurus had the tendency to critique rival ideologies and cultures as good or bad to the extent that they conformed to or deviated from American norms (on this, see also Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009). This syndrome was widely reflected in the quantitative sociopsychological and sociocultural traditions of (mass) communication studies, but not so much in the qualitative traditions identified as rhetoric, semiotics, phenomenology, and critical theory.

The quantitative traditions, which emphasized the use of inferential statistics for interpreting and analyzing data gathered from field studies, relied heavily on the linear Newtonian paradigm to claim scientific status. Peter Westbroek, a geophysiologist, bluntly expressed his disenchantment with the assumptions associated with the classical Newtonian approach and its extension to the social sciences:

> Classical science searches for simple rules of general applicability underlying the multiple phenomena. Its quest is order, causality, and determinism. It splits the world into elementary components and isolates them from their environment. It creates fragmentation of the scientific enterprise into insular disciplines and ignores the social stratum from which science emerges. Although its successes are overwhelming, classical science is incapable of placing problems into their proper context. As a result, it can only lead to a mutilated view of the real world, and to technological applications that are blind, unchecked, and manipulative. Thus, the old science fails to properly address the huge problems facing us today – mass destruction, the environmental problem, global economic deregulation, the demographic explosion, and social inequality. (Westbroek, 2004, p. 408)

My disenchantment with the scientific method arose when, out of curiosity, I read the seminal work of Capra (1975), a quantum physicist, who drew parallels between the mysteries of quantum mechanics and the mysticism of Eastern philosophies. The members of Murphy Hall faculty, who taught me communication theory and methodology, knew very little about the implications of quantum mechanics for the social sciences. They conveniently ignored systems theory and its various outgrowths – the general systems theory, chaos theory, and the complexity theory – as well as world systems analysis (Wallerstein, 2004; Gunaratne, 2001b).

Because hypotheses concerning wholes such as the universe or the world were (almost) impossible to test, Murphy Hall preferred to research the parts. Its members were exponents of reductionism who tossed the idea that the whole was more than the sum of its parts into the domain of metaphysics.

For three decades after I earned my doctorate, I taught the classical (and largely American) version of journalism and mass communication to students in three countries where I worked: Australia, Malaysia, and the United States. I decided to change course when I realized that the sociocultural values I learned as a child and as a youth in my country of birth were noticeably absent from the Western models I learned in America. As Wallerstein (2006) correctly points out, these models lacked universal universalism, which they confuse with Western universalism – a Trojan horse implanted by Western scholars to confer the status of universalism on Western thought, in hopes of maintaining their supremacy over the academic world's order (Gunaratne, 2010b).

I decided to study Eastern philosophies – particularly Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism, and Confucianism – because Capra's (1975) work and that of his followers, for instance Goswami (2000) and Zukav (1979), made me conscious of my ignorance (*avijja*) of Asian culture and religions. I felt that my doctoral education would have been richer had I received directions to explore the potential of Eastern philosophies (Gunaratne, 2004a; 2005a; 2009a) to enrich communication studies. Further encouraged by the groundbreaking work of Kincaid (1987), I wrote my first book on communication theory, *The Dao of the Press: A Humanocentric Theory* (Gunaratne, 2005b), 33 years after I got my doctorate.

Goswami (2000), a quantum physicist from Oregon, concluded that quantum physics has dismantled the fundamental principles of materialist–realist science: causal determinism, continuity, locality, strong objectivity, material monism and reductionism, and epiphenomenalism. Backed by an array of incontrovertible evidence that he supplied, I wrote *The Dao of the Press* in hopes of merging Eastern philosophy and Western science to demonstrate the veracity of diversity within unity.

In *The Dao of the Press* (Gunaratne, 2005b), I tried to explicate the Eastern view of democracy, the congruence of quantum physics with Eastern philosophy, the emerging theory of living systems, the obvious West-centrism of the classic *Four Theories of the Press*, the potential of linking Eastern philosophy with Western science, and the connection between democracy and journalism. Finally, I put together my own theory of communication outlets and free expression as a substitute for *Four Theories of the Press.* However, to my dismay, I found only a mild interest and mostly a deafening silence among my colleagues in mass communication.

In a review published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Tom Bivins (2007) surmised that I have advocated a more "humanocentric" theory stressing the interdependence of living systems in place of the "one-size-fits-all approach of Western democracy and its concomitant press theories." Although Bivins conceded that my book had much to ponder about, he complained that the reader had to "wade through the often imponderable language and the dense theoretical explication" (p. 634). Bivins' analysis of my book was fair. But, by disparaging the Chinese *yin–yang* meta-theory as too simplistic, he revealed his allegiance to the Trojan horse.

On the other hand, Christians et al. (2009), in their exemplary inquiry on normative theories of the media, conceded the Euro-centricity of the *Four Theories* and the inadequacy of the eponymous theories to evaluate the press around the world. Quoting my own text, they also observed that I had integrated "Western epistemology with Eastern mysticism into a dynamic humanocentric theory of communication outlets and free expression to replace the static, deontic normative theories of the press" (p. 14).

The Purpose of This Chapter

I started this chapter in the unusual manner of a braggadocio so as to establish my credentials for writing on the touchy subject of Western science and Eastern mysticism.

The purpose of the chapter is to elucidate how the putative esoteric philosophies of the East, particularly Buddhism, could be applied to improve the theory and methodology of what is loosely called communication studies. My aim is to de-Westernize our field of studies so as to establish universal universalism; it is not to establish Asia-centrism (*yin*, "anti-particle") in place of West-centrism (*yang*, "particle"), but to blend them where possible. In short, I am engaged in helping Eastern philosophy to rise up from its current stage of *jaramarana* ("decay and death") and proceed to its *bhavacakra* ("wheel of becoming"), so that it may be reborn into its next cycle of existence, as part of *samsara* ("cyclic existence").

First, I shall explain how the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of dependent co-arising (*paticca samuppada*) could serve as a rudimentary meta-theoretical framework or paradigm to determine the chain of factors or links (*nidānas*) instrumental in causing or in processing a particular phenomenon. Systems' characteristics are embedded in this theory. The latter asseverates that nothing in the universe is independent.

Second, I shall elucidate how the application of the noble eight-fold path (NEP), an essential part of the dynamics of the *paticca samuppada* (PS) principle, could be applied to the West-centric news paradigm currently in vogue to improve the quality of journalism in the world.

Paticca samuppada and Mediatization

Early Buddhism used the causal law outlined in the *paticca samuppada* (PS) paradigm to explain every phenomenon, for example the process of evolution and dissolution of the world; natural occurrences like drought, earthquakes, or cycles of plant life; and the unfolding of human personality. They also applied the same causal law to explain psychological processes as well as moral, social, and spiritual behavior.

Thus scholars in the past have used the PS paradigm to unfold processes that went well beyond the limits of spiritual behavior. In my opinion, the PS paradigm

and the Daoist *Yijing* paradigm – according to which everything is made up of two complementary opposites, *yin* and *yang* – are the precursors of modern systems theory, although West-centric scholarship has failed to acknowledge it. I believe that the PS paradigm, together with the *yin–yang* principle embodied in the *Yijing* paradigm, could provide the architecture necessary to build a formidable meta-theory from which to derive hypotheses in all the sciences as well as in the humanities, covering all three classic subdisciplines of Western philosophy: epistemology, ontology, and ethics (or, put another way, "axiology" – the study of values).

For the sake of word economy, I shall use the Sanskrit and Pali terminology to refer to key concepts borrowed from Eastern philosophy, because English lacks the ability to capture the exact meaning of concepts such as *dukkha* (often translated "suffering," though it could also designate disappointment, unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, or any other physical or mental affliction), *anatta* (often translated "no self" or "asoulity," in other words "non-soulness," to convey the rather different meaning that no living being has a permanent soul), and *anicca* (often translated "impermanence," though it has the wider meaning of "ongoing change" applicable to all physical, biological, and psychological phenomena). These three concepts constitute the *ti-lakkhana* ("three marks of existence").

What is *paticca samuppada*?

The core of Buddhist philosophy is in "the four noble truths":

1 The truth of *dukkha*: that existence is suffering.
2 The truth of the origin of *dukkha*: that *avijja* (ignorance) and *tanha* (desire or craving) are the major causes of suffering.
3 The truth of the cessation of *dukkha*: that a path exists to eliminate suffering.
4 The truth of the path to liberation from *dukkha*: that this path is the noble eight-fold path.

Buddha did not intend these to be taken as propositional truths. They are experiential truths that every sentient being could find out for itself. The term *dukkha*, in the sense outlined above, indicates a lack of perfection or a condition that never measures up to anyone's standards and expectations. Concerning the quest for truth, Buddha told his followers:

> "Do not believe religious teachings just because they are *claimed* to be true, or even through the application of various methods or techniques," Buddha said. He commended direct knowledge grounded in one's own experience. He asked people to heed the words of the wise but discouraged passive acceptance. He encouraged constant questioning and personal testing to identify the truth because such demonstration enables "you to *actually reduce* your own stress or misery …" (*Kalama Sutta* in the *Anguttara Nikaya* as summarized in Wikipedia, accessed on December 11, 2013. It cites translations from Pali by three monks: Bodhi, Soma, and Thanissaro)

The following paragraph summarizes the operational dynamics of the 12 *nidānas* in the *bhavacakra* of a sentient being in its repeated journey through *samsara*:

> With ignorance [*avijja*] as a condition, formations [*sankhara*] come to be; with formations as a condition, consciousness [*vinnana*] comes to be; with consciousness as a condition, name and form [*nama-rupa*] come to be; with name and form as a condition, the six bases [*salayatana*] come to be; with the six bases as a condition, contact [*phassa*] comes to be; with contact as a condition, feeling [*vedana*] comes to be; with feeling as a condition, desire [*tanha*] comes to be; with desire as a condition, clinging [*upadana*] comes to be; with clinging as a condition, being [*bhava*] comes to be; with being as a condition, birth [*jati*] comes to be; with birth as a condition, aging and death [*jara-marana*] come to be. The interaction of these 12 *nidānas* [conditions] – a sentient being's sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair – this whole mass of suffering [*dukkha*] is called the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering.

As one can see, the preceding paragraph sums up an entire living system or a network bounded by *samsara* – the eternal cycle of existence or continuous flow that accommodates the *bhavacakra* (wheel of becoming) of all sentient beings. The paragraph succinctly explicates the Buddhist theory of causation. The general paraphrase that explains the Pali phrase *paticca samuppada* is this: everything arises in dependence upon multiple causes and conditions; nothing exists as a singular, independent entity. The phrase is also rendered as "dependent co-origination," "conditioned genesis," or "conditioned co-production."

In its abstract form, the PS paradigm asserts: this being, that becomes; from the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; from the ceasing of this, that ceases. The Theravada Buddhists (Tilakaratne, 2012) translated the abstract into the concrete by applying the general principle to the 12 *nidānas* (referred to as *this* and *that*), which invariably engendered *dukkha* in sentient beings trapped in *samsara* (continuous flow, cyclic existence) because of their *karma* (volitional actions). Buddhists believe that the *karma* committed by a sentient being in its journey through *samsara* largely conditions that being's level of *dukkha*, which is engendered by the mutual interaction of the *nidānas*. These *nidānas* denote the causal laws that operate in nature: physical laws (*utu-niyāma*), biological laws (*bīja- niyāma*), psychological laws (*citta- niyāma*), and so on.

The bold italics in the numbered items listed below are the Pali terms for the 12 *nidānas*, as given in the Pali canon. The first five relate to the physical, biological, and environmental influences on an embryo and its growth; the next five are psychological factors that an organism could control so as to increase or decrease its level of *dukkha*; and the last two relate to the birth of an embryo and its inevitable decay and death.

In the explanation that follow, I have placed the co-arising *nidānas* as a cluster of interconnected and interdependent links, which continuously share feedback with one another within the overarching boundaries of each living being's own

"wheel of becoming," *bhavacakra*, and within the wider boundary of *samsara*. The operational definitions we attach to each of the *nidānas* and the boundaries wherein they operate will ultimately determine whether our research belongs to science or to scientism. In the following commentary on the component *nidānas* of the PS network, I have indicated how one might adapt or adjust each component of this kind to investigate the causes, process, and effects of the phenomenon of mediatization or globalization.

The PS paradigm takes us through a single rotation of an organism's *bhava-cakra*. The rotation could start at any of the *nidānas* comprising the wheel and continue to its next cycle. Buddha refuted the notions of a first cause and last cause.

1 With *avijja* (ignorance of the globalization and mediatization dynamics) as condition, ***saṅkhāra*** (fuzzy mental fabrications about mediatization/globalization) arise.

   By *avijja* Buddha meant ignorance of the core of Buddhist philosophy expressed in the four noble truths and the dependent co-arising doctrine. By *saṅkhāra* Buddha meant the form-creating faculty of the mind.

2 With *saṅkhāra* as condition, ***viññāṇa*** (mind or six types of consciousness and life force) arises.

   The embryo – the future organism – acquires the ability to experience mediatization through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the intellect.

3 With *viññāṇa* as condition, ***nāmarūpa*** (name and form) arise.

   After adding physical form (*rūpa*) to its four psychological aggregates (*skandha*) – sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness – the embryo gets a better sense of mediatization. The term *nāmarūpa* refers to the constituent processes of the sentient being, *nāma* standing for the psychological aggregates and *rūpa* for the physical form and matter. Thus the *nidānas* are not mutually exclusive because the *panca-skandha* overlap with two *nidānas* already listed. The Buddhist view is that mind and body are interdependent, interconnected, and interactive.

4 With *nāmarūpa* as condition, ***saḷāyatana*** (six sensorial "gates" related to mediatization) arise.

   The interaction of these two *nidānas* together with the joint interaction of the preceding *nidānas* signifies the infusion of the sociocultural dimension into the mediatization process of the embryo, the individual, and the organism. The six-fold *saḷāyatana* are the eyes (vision), the ears (hearing), the nose (olfaction), the tongue (taste), the skin (touch), and the mind (thought).

5 With *saḷāyatana* as condition, ***phassa/sparsa*** (actual and nominal contacts) arise. *Phassa* occurs at the coming together of sense organ, sense object, and sense consciousness.

   Researchers could use the initial *nidānas* as approximations, to demarcate the expansion of the digital world and other forms of mediatization.

The next five co-arising *nidānas* – *phassa*, *vedana*, *trsna*, *upadana*, and *bhava* – belong to the realm of psychology. In the context of widespread prevalence of

avijja, the five links listed in this paragraph play a crucial role in conditioning the effects of globalization or mediatization on the embryo, the organism, or the individual.

6 With *phassa* as condition, ***vedanā*** *(*feelings and sensations related to mediatization) arise. Pali literature mentions something between three and 108 types of *vedana*, although Buddha referred, in general, to three modes: *sukha* (pleasant), *dukkha* (unpleasant), and *atydukkham-asukhā* (neutral). Mediatization could engender *six* classes of *vedana* associated with sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought. This is the equivalent of the *dukkha* that an individual must suffer through in his or her samsaric existence. Mediatization has made it possible for people to have access to information or matter that could vitiate their morality and ethics.

7 With *vedana* as condition, ***tanha*** ("thirst" for more mediatized conveniences) arises.

Ignorance of the global architecture of mediatization could increase the cravings of the embryo, organism, or individual for more mediatization. Moreover, that organism could become excessively selfish and obsessed with the ceaseless accumulation of profits, paying little regard to ethics and morality. *Kama-tanha* (craving for sensual objects), *bhava-tanha* (craving to be) and *vibhava-tanha* (craving not to be) could make the highly mediatized system a hotbed of *dukkha*.

"Thirst" refers to the "craving or desire to hold onto pleasurable experiences, to be separated from painful or unpleasant experiences, and for neutral experiences or feelings not to decline" (Wikipedia, 2012).

8 With *tanha* as condition, ***upādāna*** (clinging or attachment to objects related to mediatization) arises.

Tanha and *upādāna* are the two primary *nidānas* for a sentient being's *dukkha*. Buddha identified four types of *upādāna*: sense pleasure, wrong view, rites and rituals, and self-doctrine. The cessation of *upādāna* is vital if one is to escape *dukkha* in the wheel of mediatization and attain *nirvana*. Information overload engendered by mediatization has increased the level of *dukkha* on the globe.

9 With *upādāna* as condition, ***bhāva*** (becoming) arises.

The Buddhist interpretation of *bhāva* is as a desire for further life and sensation; it is the condition for the arising of living beings in particular forms, through the process of birth. Whereas *saṅkhāra* refers to tendencies from past lives that act on the present, *bhava* refers to the creation of new mediatization habits and karmic tendencies, which will all come to fruition through future experiences. In the *nidāna* chain, *tanha* creates the "fuel" for continued *bhāva* (burning or becoming). Mediatization supplies much of this "fuel."

10 With *bhāva* as condition, ***jati*** (birth) arises.

Buddhism acknowledges four forms of birth: from an egg (reptiles, birds, and fish), from a womb (mammals and some worldly *devas*), from moisture (maggots), and by transformation or miraculous materialization (like most *devas*).

Mediatization, a product of embedded ignorance in the Buddhist sense, has much to do with the desire of many people to prolong their samsaric existence.

11 With *jati* as condition, ***jarāmarana*** (aging and dying) arise.

Jarāmarana refers to the inevitable end-of-life suffering of all beings prior to their *punarbhava* (rebirth in the samsaric cycle).

Before we commence the next cycle again with *avijja*, we can implicitly assume that the preceding cycle moved into a new cycle where: With *jarāmarana* as condition, *punarbhava* (re-becoming/rebirth) arises.

What is mediatization?

So far we have used mediatization as an abstract term, embedded in the broader concept of globalization. The interest of Western, particularly European communication researchers has recently shifted from globalization to mediatization. In the preceding explanations I used the terms "mediatization" and "globalization" as logical substitutes for *bhavacakra* and *samsara*, conceived of this time, respectively, as the inner and outer boundary that encircle the network of the 12 *nidānas* and oversee its operational dynamics.

I chose these two terms from a number of similar ones I found in the communications literature of the past half-century or so – urbanization, modernization, individualization, commercialization, informatization – for the following reasons. *Modernization* is a social evolution theory linked closely with urbanization and industrialization. It signifies the transition of an individual, group, or society from a traditional state to a modern state, as part of the process of becoming an urban literate media consumer endowed with the ability to rationalize and empathize (Lerner, 1958). *Informatization* (*johoka* in Japanese), "in its broadest definition, refers to the development, increase in, and diffusion of information throughout society" (Ito, 2009, p. 315). Japanese communication scholars have used the term since the 1960s. This concept absorbs developments related to the digital revolution – for example the Internet and the World Wide Web – as well as the emergence of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. *Globalization* is a much broader concept, which emphasizes the role media and communication technologies play in the "mediation" of processes that bring the world closer. Although there is no interdisciplinary agreement on what globalization means, Gunaratne asserts that it is a mere extension of the Western theories of modernization and development intended to perpetuate Western universalism. From the Buddhist point of view, "globalization is an ongoing dynamic process involving the entire environment in which humanity is only one actor" (Gunaratne, 2009c, p. 60). Thus, just like *samsara*, globalization is a never ending circular process.

Mediatization, then, could be understood as an extraction of a key component embedded in the complex globalization theory. Therefore mediatization (just like *bhavacakra*) co-arises with globalization (just like *samsara*). They are interconnected, interdependent, and interactive, as the network overseers of the

multi-*nidāna* system. From the perspective of Eastern systems thinking, we can immediately see that globalization and mediatization have functioned as co-arising *nidānas* resembling the *yin–yang* properties of the *Yijing* paradigm (see Gunaratne, 2006b). Applying the PS paradigm, we can hypothesize that:

With *globalization* as condition *mediatization* arises.

Thus the PS meta-theory enables the researcher to assess the relative importance of the variables that constitute the system to be investigated; to understand the mutual causality of all components of the system; to be cautious of research findings based on the independent–dependent dichotomy of variables; to reject the use of the *ceteris paribus* (other things remaining constant) ploy, because everything is in a state of flux (*anicca*); and to accept systems thinking because all elements are interdependent, interconnected, and interactive (as is implicit in the concept of *anatta*).

By focusing on the *nidānas* in the PS meta-theory, scholars could identify the most important links and variables pertaining to the rapid expansion of mediatization and hypothesize its nonlinear effects. They would concede that measurability and testability should not be the sole criteria for selecting the *nidānas*, considering that both material–physical and psychological–mental *nidānas* are essential to explaining the operational dynamics of a living system at any hierarchical level – macro, meso, or micro. They would also concede that a living system has no beginning and no end, because a system is an ongoing process having the attributes of *bhava* (becoming), *jati* (birth), and *jaramarana* (decay and death). Systems thinking embedded in the PS paradigm would enable us to select the hierarchical level we want to explore out of the eight proposed by Miller (1978) in his theory of living systems (Gunaratne, 2010a).

Scholars using the PS paradigm should be very careful about the operational definitions they attach to the selected variables. Do they stand up to universal universalism? Also, do the definitions (in terms of *ti-lakkhana*) warrant their replicability? Where quantitative studies are more likely to fall into "scientism," would a qualitative study be a better choice?

Mediatization, as a review of related literature shows (Finnemann, 2011), is a concept that "tries to capture long-term interrelation processes between media change on the one hand and social and cultural change on the other" (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2010, p. 223). Some scholars point out that the media shape and frame the processes and discourse of political communication, as well as the society in which that communication takes place (Lilleker, 2008). Researchers have focused on two strands: medium theory (e.g., Meyrowitz, 1995) and media effects (e.g., Rosengren, 1994).

Early communication researchers (e.g., Lerner, 1958; Rogers & Svenning, 1969) regarded the development of media as an important aspect of modernization. However, the digital revolution in the modern world has placed the communication media above the power and reach of other influential institutions

(Hjarvard, 2008). Some scholars have theorized that this process of mediatization has caused the subordination of institutions and whole societies to mass media, on which they depend (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999).

Mediatization has become more and more a core concept used to describe present and historical media and communicative change. If media become part of "everything," we can no longer see them as a separate sphere, but we must develop an understanding of how the increasing spread of media communication changes our construction of culture and society (ECREA, 2012). From such a perspective, the concept of mediatization is used to describe the long-term process of spreading different technical media and the linked interrelations between media and communicative change on the one hand, sociocultural change on the other.

Krotz (2007) has suggested that creating the framework for empirical work on mediatization and related variables should begin with the conceptualization of broad theories, which itself starts from "different forms of mediated communication" (e.g., mass, interpersonal, and interactive) rather than from a single medium. Of particular interest to Krotz are changes to "the different fields of everyday life, culture and society" at macro, meso, and micro levels.

If mediatization constitutes a global process of change, scholars could locate where there are inequalities and dissimilarities along this process exist. Additionally, it can be expected that mediatization is not the same everywhere. Both differences and similarities are likely to occur between cultures and nations in the process of mediatization.

Thus mediatization becomes part of a comparative media and communication research, both in a current and in an historical perspective: *We must think about what the (trans)cultural and (trans)national differences are and how to compare them. Also there is a need to do this in a postcolonial and non-Western perspective. And, finally, there is the challenge of doing comparative work to separate out different aspects of mediatization.*

The *samsara* and the *bhavacakra* have no beginning or end. Each *nidāna* constituting the cycle could co-arise as the conditional link (*yang*) or as its complement and opposite (*yin*). The *yin* could then co-arise as the *yang* with the next link as the *yin*, and so on. Although the *nidānas* appear as a sequential list, the process can start randomly, from any link; none of them can be singled out as the first or the last. This is because the cause becomes the effect, and in the next moment that effect becomes the cause to produce another effect. Although the components of the chain of *nidānas* interact in nonlinear fashion, to determine each organism's due share of *dukkha*, this chain can only *condition*, not determine, the organism or individual (Jayatilleke, 1974, p. 198). Also, because *dukkha* is the hallmark of *samsara*, the only way to escape *dukkha* is by attaining *nirvana* (the state of nonexistence). By substituting mediatization for *bhavacakra* and globalization for *samsara*, researchers could develop insightful hypotheses.

Thus Eastern philosophy offers a plausible platform for building a meta-theory of global mediatization. Mediatization scholars could become the pioneers of merging and adapting the philosophies of the orient and of the occident by incorporating the PS paradigm and the Chinese *yin-yang* principle embedded in the *Yijing* (*I-ching*)

paradigm as an epistemologically sound foundation for improving medium theory and for designing effects studies (see Cheng, 1987; Gunaratne, 2006b).

I submit that the original Buddhist PS paradigm built on the foundation of the *Yijing* model would provide us with the framework for a powerful systems-oriented meta-theory that could analyze the process of mediatization and other *nidānas* associated with it in scholarly discourses on the velocity of globalization (Gunaratne, 2008a, 2009c) and of mediatization.

By using the PS paradigm to do mediatization research, scholars could improve what we have already learned through the three waves of West-centric systems theories (e.g., structural functionalist, general systems and chaos, and complex dynamical) to develop a plausible meta-theory of globalization or mediatization (Gunaratne, 2010b; Ray, 2012).

Because the PS paradigm encompasses all significant *nidānas* through a single cycle of a living being's existence (*punarbhava*) in the *bhavacakra/samsara*, it alerts us to the type of variables to look for in analyzing any process within the eight-fold hierarchical system that Miller (1978) has outlined. Mediatization researchers could use the PS paradigm as a guide to trace the history and effects of the multi-faceted system of global mediatization. Mediatization scholars could further fine-tune the PS paradigm I have outlined to trace the impact of mediatization on children, organizations, nations, and the entire world system.

They could implant the ingenious aspects of the *Yijing* paradigm: for example, the split of the One into *yin* and *yang*, and how these gave rise to the complex system of 64 hexagrams that could explain the origin of any complex situation such as that of mediatization. Mutual causality in the PS paradigm, in which the cause–effect variables arise together to produce nonlinear outcomes, operates in similar fashion. Others could integrate Miller's eight-fold hierarchical living system with the PS paradigm by demonstrating how the operational dynamics of Miller's concept of 20 subsystems per system fits in with mutual causality (Gunaratne, 2010a).

The PS model provides a sound explanation of the natural law of mutual causality to show that existence is *dukkha*. We could apply the same hereditary–psychological–environmental links used in the PS paradigm to show that our existence in a globalized and mediatized world also leads to unavoidable *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness and disappointment). Globalization, like the ineluctable Dao, is the one that alternates between *wuji* (without ridgepole; boundless, infinite) and *taiji* (the great ultimate), balancing both unity and diversity in the globe we inhabit. Thus globalization is an endless process that goes back to the emergence of our globe (Gunaratne, 2009c).

The benefits of the PS paradigm

The PS paradigm warns Western mediatization theorists and social behavioral scientists:

- to recognize the distortions engendered by disregarding the mutual interdependence of variables. However, this requires a change in the very nature of West-centric theory and methodology;

- to recognize the distortions they engender by disregarding the *anicca* (impermanence) concept. Familiarity with Eastern philosophy would enable them to drop the *ceteres paribus* ploy and heavy reliance on linear models;
- to recognize that operational definitions, replication, or convergence cannot confer *independent* status on any factor. Familiarity with the three signs of existence – *anicca* (impermanence), *anatta* (asoulity), and *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) – will warn them to be wary of these ploys;
- to challenge the view that science is independent of philosophy and theology while conferring scientific status on the Big Bang theory;
- to understand the world, or the universe, as a network of systems, and to follow the innovative procedures of sociocybernetics.

Mediatization scholars could collaborate with sociocybernetics scholars, who are working on a new systems approach, which focuses on the interaction between living systems and their environment. Sociocybernetics theories no longer generate hypotheses about bivariate distributions (van der Zouwen & van Dijkum, 2001). Concurrently, sociologists themselves have been experimenting with artificial societies to study social emergence using multi-agent systems (Sawyer, 2005).

Paticca samuppada and the News Paradigm

I shall now elucidate how we could extract from the four noble truths 15 normative principles that would change the perception of news as a commodity to one of a social good. The NEP, which constitutes the fourth noble truth, shows the way out of *samsara* (cyclic existence) to attain *nirvana* (state of nothingness). The PS paradigm illustrates the operational dynamics of conditioning the *bhavacakra* of every sentient being trapped in *samsara*, where *dukkha n*ever ceases. The 12 *nidānas*, which are not mutually exclusive, have been used in the past to explain many natural phenomena like climatic change, water crisis, animal welfare, and the Asian tsunami.

Principles/goals of Buddhist journalism

All branches of Buddhist philosophy – Hinayana, Mahayana, and other offshoots – agree on the core of Buddhism I have reiterated in the preceding paragraph. Therefore the 15 principles or goals of Buddhist-oriented journalism (BJ) I have extracted from the crux of Buddhist thought should be acceptable to all Buddhist communities in the world:

1 Concede that everything is subject to ongoing change (*anicca*), the first of the three characteristics of existence (*ti-lakkhana*), and assume the role of a constructive change agent rather than that of the defender of the status quo.
2 Concede that asoulity (*anatta*) is the reality of existence, and refrain from over-emphasizing individualism, which has a causal link with egocentrism

(e.g., celebrity pitfalls). Focus more on cooperative efforts highlighting mutual interdependence at different levels – international or global, national, or local.

3 Understand the reasons for the existence of *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness), and desist from using journalism to knowingly promote attachment to *tanha* (desire).

4 Understand the significance of mutual causality for journalistic interpretation and analysis. Refrain from extensive use of linear cause–effect reasoning. Keep in mind that feedback loops condition both "causes" and "effects" and blur the conventional distinction between the two. Therefore analyze problems and solutions within "articulated integration" (Macy, 1991, p. 185) – the middle path between atomism and holism.

5 Advocate the need for humanity to work in harmony with nature, including all its flora and fauna, because everything is functionally interrelated and nothing is entirely independent. "There is no aspect of 'I' … that is not conditioned or not interconnected with at least something else" (Kasulis, 2005, pp. 398–400).

6 Discourage conspicuous consumption, "since consumption is merely a means to human well-being," and our "aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption" (Schumacher, 1973, pp. 47–48).

7 Follow the middle way and avoid the extremes on any issue. Journalism should convey the idea that people mattered – the approach that Schumacher (1973) proposed for economics more than three decades ago.

8 Follow the path of right understanding/view (*samma ditthi*): the knowledge of the four noble truths (that is, the understanding of oneself as one really is). The Buddhist's "intimacy orientation says I am moral when I am most truly myself" (Kasulis, 2005, p. 301).

9 Follow the path of right thoughts/conceptions (*samma sankappa*) in its three-fold form: thoughts of renunciation as opposed to thoughts of sense pleasures; kind thoughts as opposed to thoughts of ill-will; and thoughts of harmlessness as opposed to thoughts of cruelty. This involves a *commitment* to ethical and mental self-improvement.

10 Follow the path of right speech (*samma vaca*): abstinence from lying, divisive speech (e.g., biased opinion writing), abusive speech (e.g., defamatory writing), and idle chatter (e.g., gossip writing). (However, Asanga, the fifth-century author of several Mahayana texts, maintained that a Bodhisattva will lie to protect others from death or mutilation: Harvey, 2000, p. 139.)

11 Follow the path of right action (*samma kammanta*): abstinence from taking life (e.g., harming sentient beings intentionally), stealing (including robbery, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty), and sensual misconduct. (Some Mahayana texts, e.g., *Upāya-kausalya Sūtra*, justify killing a human being on the grounds of compassion in dire circumstances: Harvey, 2000, p. 135. Similarly, a Bodhisattva may break the precepts of stealing and celibacy on compassionate grounds.)

12 Follow the path of right livelihood (*samma ajiva*) by personally avoiding and discouraging others from activities that may harm others (e.g., trade in deadly weapons, trade in animals for slaughter, trade in slavery, and trade in intoxicants

and poisons). Some may also include public relations and advertising as harmful to the extent that they are seen "as encouraging greed, hatred and delusion, or perverting the truth" (Harvey, 2000, p. 188).

13 Follow the path of right effort (*samma vayama*), which has four steps: the effort to (a) discard evil that has already arisen, (b) prevent the arising of unrisen evil, (c) develop the good that has already arisen, and (d) promote the good that has not already arisen.

14 Follow the path of right mindfulness (*samma sati*), which has four foundations: reflection relating to the body (*kāya*); feeling (*vedanā*) – repulsive, attractive, or neutral; thought; and ideas (*dhammā*) pertaining to the experienced phenomena. (Such reflection enables one to overcome covetousness and discontent.)

15 Follow the path of right concentration (*samma samadhi*), which consists of the attainment of the four preliminary stages of contemplation, which culminate in the development of unprejudiced perception or equanimity with regard to what is perceived. (This is also considered a middle standpoint in the way in which we perceive ourselves in the world.)

Gunaratne (2009b) has explained in detail how he extracted the 15 principles of BJ from each of the four noble truths (elucidated in the previous section with regard to their relevance to build a nonlinear PS paradigm as a guide to mediatization research). He drew the first three principles from the first noble truth: that existence is *dukkha*; the next three principles from the second and third noble truths: that *avijja* and *tanha* are the major causes of *dukkha*; and that a path exists to end *dukkha*. The last eight principles came from the fourth noble truth: that NEP is the path to liberate from *dukkha*.

American journalist Doug McGill (2008) says that journalistic practices grounded in Buddhist morality is most likely to produce (1) a *journalism of healing*, because the goal of Buddhism is achieving the end of "suffering," which connotes many facets of existence; and (2) a *journalism of timely, truthful, and helpful speech* based on the NEP, which focuses on three functionally interdependent areas for practice: *paññā* (wisdom), *sila* (virtue or ethical conduct), and *samādhi* (concentration or mental development).

The principles of journalism extracted from the *paññā* component of the NEP – namely right understanding and right thoughts – attempt to ensure that a journalist is committed to ethical and mental self-improvement. Wisdom means a thorough understanding of the four noble truths and of their operational dynamics, explained in the PS paradigm.

The principles extracted from the *sila* component of the NEP – right speech, right action, and right livelihood – complement the moral code of the Decalogue.

The principles extracted from the *samadhi* component of the NEP – right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration – show the emphasis that Buddhism places on meditation, a potent therapy for treating the communicative pathologies of the modern lifeworld (Habermas, 1984/1981). Journalists trained in meditation are most likely to perform better as practitioners of BJ.

BJ and mainstream journalism

Because BJ follows the middle path between capitalism and socialism, a comparison and contrast of Buddhist *goals* and principles with *traits* of the West-centric mainstream news paradigm seem quite appropriate. Although *goals* are normative while *traits* reflect performance with warts and all, finding out the discrepancies between the two is necessary for ascertaining the strengths and weaknesses of the current news paradigm, because the society at large possesses underlying but transformative beliefs and values, which engender normative journalistic goals.

The three signs of existence – *anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (asoulity), and *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow) – imply that a perfect journalism is not attainable. However, the middle path points out the multiple pathways available to practitioners who aim at reaching the ever elusive equifinality. One should note that the Buddhist approach requires the journalists to improve (or purify) their minds through the paths of *paññā* (wisdom) and *samādhi* (mental development).[1] The assumption here is that journalists with "impure" minds would produce "impure" journalism that would increase *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow) no matter what awards they receive.

Traits of mainstream journalism

Hoyer (2005) analyzed the mainstream news paradigm in terms of five elements: the event, news value factors, the news interview, the inverted pyramid, and journalistic objectivity. For analytical convenience, we will sequentially examine each of these elements in relation to Buddhist goals.

The event The mainstream paradigm thrives on "newsworthy" events, which must fit the 24-hour news cycle (gradually adopted by the wire services). News is ephemeral because an event is not a fixed entity.

The news paradigm (Stensaas, 2005) and the Buddhist perspective both recognize that news is *anicca* because the elements of a "newsworthy" event change every moment. The two approaches differ to the extent that the news paradigm treats the event as a fixed entity whereas the Buddhist approach sees it as a continuing *process*, which becomes increasingly complex as it reciprocally interacts with other factors.

News value factors These are the criteria that journalists apply to determine the "newsworthiness" of events and processes. Mencher (2006) lists eight news values: impact or importance (the predominant factor), timeliness, prominence (of the people involved), proximity (to the audience), conflict, the unusual, currency (or the sudden interest people have in an ongoing situation), and necessity (a situation the journalist feels compelled to reveal).

The first factor, *impact*, relates to events that are likely to affect many people. Mencher (2006, p. 59) says: "The more people that are affected by the event, the bigger the story." Although this criterion per se does not contradict Buddhist

goals, the doctrine of dependent co-arising requires placing it in context with the other co-arising factors. An event by itself is a news "atom" that does not explain the ongoing interaction and interdependence of relevant factors behind the event.

The second factor, *timeliness*, relates to events that are immediate or recent. Mencher says that timeliness is important in a democracy because the public has to react quickly to the activities of its officials. Mencher adds that timeliness is also important because "media are commercial enterprises that sell space and time on the basis of their ability to reach people quickly with a perishable commodity" (p. 58). The Buddhist perspective sees news as a social good, not as a commodity serving the profit-maximizing desire of businesses. The Buddhist approach, which is more concerned with process, does not see the need for immediacy at the expense of accuracy and analysis of the functional interaction of co-arising factors.

The third factor, *prominence*, pertains to events involving well-known people or institutions. Mencher (2006, p. 59) says: "Names make news, goes the old adage, even when the event is of little significance." Thus mainstream journalism is a journalism of personalities. This news value is antithetical to Buddhist values, which see asoulity (*anattā*), impermanence (*anicca*), and sorrow (*dukkha*) as the three marks of existence. Personality journalism signifies individualism or atomism, which breeds egocentrism and sorrow. (Note that Islam, an Abrahamic religion, also has always considered individualism as subordinate to the collective community: Denny, 2005, p. 269.)

The fourth factor, *proximity*, relates to events that are geographically or emotionally close to people. Emotional closeness may arise from ties to religion, ethnicity, or race. Buddhadasa Bhikku's view (cited in Sivaraksa, 2002, p. 58) that the entire cosmos is a cooperative is clearly antithetical to proximity as a news value.

The fifth value, *conflict*, pertains to stories about "ordinary people confronting the challenges of daily lives," "conflicts that divide people and groups," or strife, antagonisms, and warfare (Mencher, 2006, pp. 60–61). Journalists have applied this news value to write narrative-style features incorporating the three elements of drama: man versus man, man versus self, and man versus nature. The Buddhist view on applying this criterion depends on the purpose of the story. Event-oriented stories on violence, war, and crime – news "atoms" based on conflict – are not an essential part of Buddhist-oriented journalism. Buddhism holds that an interdependent society should bear equal responsibility for the social deviance of an individual whose existence has no self (*anattā*). Therefore reporting conflict-based stories highlighting individuals is inappropriate. However, process stories analyzing the co-arising factors for increase or decrease in crime and violence may be appropriate for the purpose of society taking steps to rehabilitate wrongdoers.

The sixth value, *the unusual*, concerns events "that deviate sharply from the expected" or "that depart considerably from the experiences of everyday life" (Mencher, 2006, p. 61). These include the bizarre, the strange, and the wondrous. Journalists have applied this news value to write brights, sidebars, and features. The Buddhist perspective does not approve of using this value to project a negative light on any person, group, nation, or race by deviating from the path of right

speech and by resorting to idle chatter. Too much emphasis on the unusual may mean a higher priority for event reporting (news as a commodity) than for process reporting (news as a social good).

The last two, *currency* and *necessity*, are more recent additions to the repertoire of news values. When a long-simmering situation "suddenly emerge[s] as the subject of discussion" (Mencher, 2006, p.61), the journalist applies the *currency* news value to report that situation. The *necessity* news value is applied when "the journalist feels it is necessary to disclose something that s/he has discovered," which is essentially a "journalism of conscience" (pp. 62–63). These two factors are compatible with the Buddhist perspective when journalists write process-oriented news as a social good, without the intention (*cetana*) of deviating from the eight paths subsumed under *sila* (virtue), *samādhi* (mental development), and *paññā* (wisdom).

The preceding analysis leads us to the conclusion that:

> Buddhist goals and mainstream news values and traits do not see eye to eye in relation to three factors – prominence, proximity, and the unusual; are ambiguous in relation to three other factors – timeliness, impact, and conflict; and are potentially compatible with the last two factors – currency and necessity.

The news interview Schudson (2005) contends that the journalistic interview was all but unknown in 1865, had become a common reportorial activity in the 1870s and 1880s, was widely practiced by 1900, and had turned into a mainstay of American journalism by World War I. Other scholars claim that the interview was introduced into tabloids by the 1830s along with police reports. Today the interview is used to update news, as well as to provide multiple views on issues. Mainstream journalism also uses the interview to create human interest stories and to give the hard copy a sense of timeliness.

Buddhist goals do not encourage the interviews that promote excessive individualism at the expense of the collective good. Building up personalities through journalistic interviews violates the truth of asoulity linked with impermanence and sorrow. Interviews that elicit group thinking are preferred. Follow the middle path by not favoring specific sources for regular attribution.

The inverted pyramid This structure of news writing was another ploy to sell news as a more profitable commodity. Some believe that its invention was inadvertent. During the American Civil War, journalists were forced to file the essential facts first because of the unreliability of the telegraph facilities at the time. This practice became formalized almost a century later, when many readers showed a preference for the narrative style. Interpreting this element of the news paradigm, we can conclude that:

> Buddhist goals emphasize process reporting to explain the mutual interaction of multiple factors. By revealing the essence of the story first, the inverted pyramid structure encourages people to consume news very superficially and not read any further, which thereby nullifies the purpose of process reporting.

Journalistic objectivity Stensaas (2005) says that the notion of *objectivity* is at the core of the mainstream news paradigm. Objectivity became the shared professional norm of American journalism in the 1920s (Schudson, 2005). Journalism tried to achieve objectivity, *inter alia*, by using the interview to present all sides of an issue; by conducting scientific opinion polls on significant issues; by discouraging reporters from injecting their opinion into their stories; and by using computer assisted reporting to analyze and interpret data related to numerous matters of public interest. How does objectivity fit into a journalism based on Buddhist values?

> Because Buddhist epistemology asserts that the knower (observer) and the known (observed) are interdependent, "this causal interplay renders it impossible to claim or prove an ultimate truth … Data gathering and interpretation are not value free, but freighted with emotional predispositions and cognitive preconceptions." (Macy, 1991, p. 196)

Jayatilleke (1963) points out that in Buddhism "verifiability is a test of truth but does not itself constitute the truth." Many truths in Buddhism "are considered to lie midway between two extreme points of view" (p. 359). The Buddhist theory of truth, as Jayatilleke explains, makes it clear that truth, and therefore knowledge, are "objective," as they tell us the nature of "things as they are," which consists of knowing "what exists as 'existing' and what does not exist as 'not existing'" (p. 428). This is the highest knowledge. What the Buddha meant by objective knowledge was experiential knowledge that one could acquire through concentration and mental development (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). This interpretation is very different from the notions of objectivity and truth in the news paradigm.

Conclusion

A Buddhist-oriented journalism goes well beyond journalism per se, for the journalist must acquire the right understanding about the functional interdependence and interaction of mass media with all other social subsystems – legal, economic, religious, educational, administrative, political, and so on. It is incumbent upon the journalist to make journalism the right livelihood and to follow the paths of right action and right speech. To do this and to acquire inner peace, the journalist must also improve his/her mind through the paths of concentration and wisdom. The journalist's obligation is to promote social well-being, not the capital accumulation of conglomerate media. The existing strands of journalism pay no attention to building the power of the journalist's mind, which cannot be done by scholarship alone.

The BJ model, as outlined in this chapter, provides a normative model for those who aspire to elevate news from a commodity to a social good. BJ is incompatible with advertising dependence, but cyberspace offers it a fertile ground for the goal implementation intended to circumvent *dukkha*. The focus of the putative Buddhist newspapers – as it has been since the 1880s, when the theosophists kick-started

engaged Buddhism in Japan and Sri Lanka – continues to be on Buddhism and related activities rather than on the application of process journalism to explain the mutual causality of co-arising factors related to various phenomena over time.[2] Because of the belief in mutual interdependence, Buddhism holds both the individual and the society responsible for an individual's deviance. It prefers the rehabilitation of the deviant rather than imprisonment and execution. Thus violence, war, crime, and punishment are not newsworthy from the perspective of Buddhist philosophy, although explaining these phenomena as a mutually interacting process is permissible. It does not pass judgment on the occidental news paradigm, which may continue with event-oriented reporting as a functionally interdependent category (or shade) of the continuum of journalism.

BJ cannot depend on revenue from advertising, which is instrumental in increasing *tanhā* (craving) and other *nidānas*, which are linked to *dukkha* (suffering/sorrow). Therefore it cannot thrive as a competitive private enterprise. It can succeed only as a community enterprise supported by ordinary people, global civil society, and foundations committed to Buddhist values. In short, BJ must move on to situate itself within the framework of interdependence (or no-self), a vital aspect of oriental cosmology.

Buddhist nations should be the trailblazers of a Buddhist-oriented journalism, although the "new" Buddhists in the West have shown a greater interest in using cyberspace, as well as newspapers, to promote Buddhist views (cf. McGill, 2008). The state (in Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) could support BJ through a modest tax specified for the purpose. Engaged Buddhists, like those in the Fo Guang Shan movement in Taiwan (Berkson, 2005), can play a major role in elevating the existing form of BJ to the level of process reporting. Inasmuch as mutual interdependence is a verifiable fact, BJ would be an interdependent rather than an independent journalism. It would take the middle path, following neither authoritarian nor libertarian proclivities. Because diversity and unity are complementary (as illustrated in the *Yijing* model of 64 hexagrams), mainstream journalism should accommodate and support the practice of BJ.

Adherence to Buddhist goals does not make it a religious journalism, for its allegiance is only to the Buddhist philosophy. Anyone from any religion could do BJ to promote the collective good, not individualism or vanity of celebrities. Its supreme purpose is to create a healthy environment for all living beings who could live in harmony with nature, because everything grows together in the manner of a web (Galtung, Jacobsen, & Brand-Jacobsen, 2000, p. 82). It cannot be the purveyor of titillating news intended to arouse the darker side of human beings. Ethical action is much more important than legal justification as required by right action, right speech, and right livelihood – paths that receive endorsement from the Decalogue as well. Last but not the least, the purification of human character is more important than "a multiplication of wants" (Schumacher, 1973, p. 46). The "new" American Buddhists are striking a careful balance between meditational training and political activism (Prebish & Tanaka, 1998). Buddhist journalists, both in the orient and the occident, can do the same.

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Notes

1 Clarke (1997) points out that in recent years meditation has become popular as a psycho-physiological therapy, both at the professional and at the popular level. He cites Gestalt theorists Claudio Naranjo and Robert Ornstein, who say: "Oriental meditation techniques give importance to psycho-physiological factors and to the experience of everyday sounds, images, movements, and bodily functions" (Naranjo & Ornstein, quoted in Clarke, 1997, p. 161).

2 Some examples are *Budusarana*, a Sinhala weekly with random articles in English and Tamil, published in Colombo by Sri Lanka's state-owned newspaper company; *Merit Times*, a daily published in Chinese in Taiwan and in English in California by the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order and Buddha's Light International Association in collaboration with the *Chinese Daily News*; and several US publications: the quarterly *Tricycle*; *The Buddhist Review*; the bimonthly *Shambhala Sun*; and *Turning Wheel*, the journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. The *Merit Times* does not publish news about violence, war, accidents, and the like; it focuses on Buddhism-related events and on interesting events that occur around the world.

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45

Understanding Mass Media
A Buddhist Viewpoint

Wimal Dissanayake

The objective of this short chapter is to underline the importance of Buddhism as a way of thought in understanding the some facets of the complexities of mass media. Within the brief compass of this chapter I can do no more than hint at some useful lines of inquiry, which need to be pursued with vigor and in a larger compass by those interested in this topic. During the past three decades or so a number of communication scholars have sought to underscore the importance of exploring Asian theories of communication. Their argument regarding the urgency of this undertaking is as follows. Communication, it is generally agreed, is the lifeblood of society. It is crucial to the functioning of human societies. Communication is constitutive of culture, and no culture can breathe without communication. Hence it is important to broaden the field of communication and to extend its discursive space by focusing on Asian theories of communication. It is evident that, so far, most studies of communication theory have confined themselves to Western intellectual traditions. An attempt to explore Asian theories of communication would almost certainly serve to contextualize communications research more fruitfully.

The study of Asian theories of communication is as fascinating as it is intricate; it throws up numerous challenges that the researches have to address carefully and sensitively. Here two important questions present themselves. First, what are the reasons that impel us to study the Asian theories of communication? Second, in what ways will the uncovering and redescription of Asian theories of communication serve to change the intellectual cartography of communication studies that has been shaped largely by Eurocentric desires? How can Asian theories and concepts of communication that came into existence thousands of years ago, in a nontechnological environment, address complex issues of mass communication in the twenty-first century?

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As I already stated, it is generally agreed that communication is the lifeblood of society. It is pivotal to the maintenance of social order. Studies have shown that even the most primitive human societies had systems of communication that served to sustain social cohesion. After all, the words communication – community – communion are etymologically linked. As human society progressed, more and more complex forms and systems of human communication emerged. With the development of technology, communication gave way to mass communication and, thanks to the stupendous growth of technology related to satellite communication and computers, communication is becoming more efficient and intricate. It is also becoming more challenging, raising numerous questions related to representation and reality. It is against this background that we have to address the question of Asian theories of communication.

During the past three decades or so there has been concerted attempt to explore the significance of Asian theories of communication. The work of such scholars as Chen (1998), Dissanayake (1982), Ishii (1998), Jensen (1992), Kincaid (1987), Miike (2002), Nordstrom (1979), Oliver (1971), and Thayer (1979) – to mention but a few names – has given a great fillip to these studies. These scholars have sought to point out that, while Western communication theory has developed rapidly during the last five decades or so, no significant attempt has been made to understand communication from an Asian perspective. Hence their effort is to be perceived as a much needed corrective measure. What they argue, justifiably in my view, is that communication can emerge as a more meaningful and relevant field of study only if we are prepared to establish important, and hitherto unforeseen connections with communication and indigenous cultural roots, situated knowledges, and local forms of being. Therefore these scholars – and I count myself among them – contend that there is a compelling need to construct and rediscover Asian theories, models, an concepts of communication; this is of the utmost importance to their research agenda. This is of course not to fall into a kind of naïve cultural essentialism. Communication theories found in Asian cultures and traditions are many, and they are evolving. As we seek to uncover them, we need to be mindful of the complexities and diversities inherent in them.

During the past 30 years or so, many of the communication scholars interested in the rediscovery and formulation of Asian theories and models have followed a number of interesting strategies. First, they have turned their critical gaze to classical texts in traditions like the Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean, intending to uncover significant formulations and conceptualizations of communication. Many of these texts bear the imprint of philosophical and speculative thinking, as dictated by their respective intellectual traditions. It is evident that in countries like China, Japan, India, and Korea, which can lay claims to a distinguished and rich cultural history, there are in existence several important texts that can be examined for this purpose. For example, the *Analects* of Confucius, the *Natyashastra* of Bharata in India, or the writings of Zeami in Japan on drama contain very many useful insights into communication that can be mined productively.

Second, the whole domain of folk rituals and performances provides modern communication scholars with a valuable space in which to carry out investigations

into communication theories and concepts. These rituals and performances can be religious in nature or they can be social and communal activities. To cite one example, Tamostu Aoki has presented us with a semiotic analysis of the Buddhist ritual of *paritta*, which is common in countries such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar; his analysis is designed to reveal the communication concepts embedded in it (Aoki, 1991). These are just two areas in which Asian communication scholars have displayed their analytical skill. To my mind, it is in the analysis of concepts textualized in ancient traditions that scholars interested in Asian communication theory have achieved their most significant gains. For example, Yoshitaka Miike (2002) investigates – very productively – the overlappings between the concepts of *amae* and *enryo-sasshi*. We find in Miike's analysis an investigative desire to select a concept that is centrally connected to communal life in Japan and to make it an object of critical study, so as to foreground its communication significance.

So far, it is evident that some significant gains have been made in explorations into Asian communication theories. If our endeavors are to bear fruit in any significant way, it is important that we relate Asian theories, models, paradigms, and concepts of communication to modern mass communication realities. It is only then that the study of Asian communication theory will have the full and significant resonance it needs. In this short chapter I wish to do just that: to point out how some important concepts contained in Buddhism will enable us to acquire a deeper understanding of the complex and multi-faceted realities associated with mass communication. To be sure, mass communication is a product of modern society, and Buddhism arose thousands of years ago, in a non-industrialized society. Hence any attempt to make a conjunction between Buddhism and mass communication gives rise to a multitude of complicated issues.

Mass communication, it need hardly be stressed, is a product of modern technology. As I pointed out, communication has always been an invariant feature of human society; a social collectivity cannot emerge as a functioning unit in the absence of communication. However, with the stupendous growth of science and technology, communication has given way to complex forms of mass communication. This is indeed a process that has been steadily gathering momentum since the sixteenth century, when the printing press was invented and developed in Europe. There are a number of features that distinguish mass communication, and for purposes of analytic convenience I wish to identify six of them.

First, mass communication arises in highly structured institutional systems. One cannot think of newspapers, radio, or television as functioning without the clear and steady support of such institutional structures. This feature has great implications for the production, dissemination, and consumption of mass media messages.

Second, there is a curious interplay between impersonality and personality in mass communication. Interpersonal, face-to-face communication is characterized, for example, by a certain personal and subjective phenomenology. This is clearly not the case with mass communication, which by its very nature demands impersonality. However, this should not force us to conclude that mass communication

is purely impersonal. To be sure, there us an intriguing interplay between impersonality and personality that needs to be unpacked carefully.

Third, mass communication is marked by a complex process of reproduction and reduplication of messages and by complex forms of storage and retrieval of messages. This is vitally connected with the ever expanding power of technology. Technological innovation and the expansion of the reproducibility of mass mediated messages are vitally connected.

Fourth, one observes an inevitable commodification of messages in mass communication that is (and was) clearly absent in face-to-face interpersonal interactions. Mass communication deals with a symbolic universe that is increasingly being subject to the powers and blandishments of consumerism. In other words, economics and communication are conjoined as never before, in complex and evolving formations.

Fifth, there is a space–time compression involved in mass communication. The distances in space and time are minimized in the mass mediated dissemination of messages, and there comes into being a new and complex relationship between space, time, and self. This new configuration has great implications for the understanding of communication.

Sixth, mass communicated messages are public products; they emerge out of public spaces. This publicness marks in interesting ways the production, dissemination, and reception of messages disseminated by the mass media. Theoretically, mass mediated messages are available to a plurality of receivers, and this fact invests them with a certain public and open character. Receivers inhabit diverse spaces, which can be united by these publicly available messages. These are some of the distinctive features of mass communication, and they serve to invest mass communication with its distinctive stamp. As a consequence of the influence of mass communication, a new social reality, which can be usefully described as a media reality, has come into being. It is of the utmost importance that we, as communication scholars, pay close attention to the new and ever evolving media reality and fashion analytical tools that would enable us to comprehend its true epistemological complexities. So far Western communication scholars have sought to adopt an instrumental approach to this new reality – an approach that consists in examining how the new reality promotes and enhances communication. However, it is important, to my mind, to adopt a more constitutive approach, which raises questions of epistemology. One of the main contentions of this chapter is to suggest that Buddhism allows us to think along these lines. Questions of appearance and reality, mimesis and representation, the problematic of time – all these, I contend, are at the root of Buddhist thought.

The new media reality that has emerged in recent years has been the object of inquiry of some leading postmodernist thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard. His concepts of simulacrum and hyperreality allow us to examine the phenomenon with fresh eyes (see Baudrillard, 1990). Similarly, some of the insightful writings of Paul Virilio enable us to understand the complex facets that go to form this new mass mediated reality (see, e.g., Virilio, 1994). Questions of representation are foregrounded in

these two authors' writings in compelling ways. It is my belief that a deep understanding of Buddhism would promote a more productive critical engagement with this new media reality and would allow us to chart its contours more intelligently.

Buddhism is one of the great religions of the world that focus on the centrality of human effort – rather than divine or superhuman interventions – in the attainment of salvation. The ideas of impermanence (*anitya*), suffering (*dukkha*), and no-self (*anatma*) lie at the root of Buddhist thinking and are central to it. Buddhist phenomenology tends to assert that everything is inescapably and invariably in a state of flux, and this recognition should enter into all our speculations about life and death. Everything that arises inevitably decays and dies, and no object or state of being is immune to this transformational process. The becoming of human beings is more central to Buddhist thought than their being. This is because Buddha conceived of the human being not as a self-contained and static entity but as one that is incessantly caught in the power of change.

These ideas find eloquent articulation in one of the pivotal concepts of Buddhism, namely "dependent co-origination" (*pratitya samutpada*). This concept carries within it a fund of ideas and insights related to the dynamics of human communication. Hence, in seeking to forge a connection between Buddhism and mass communication, I wish to call attention to the heuristic significance of the concept of dependent co-origination. In order to understand the true significance of this concept, it is important to highlight the intellectual contexts it was revolting against. At the time the Buddha formulated this concept there were two dominant approaches to what we may call the ontology of being. The first was to argue that one could discern a rigid pattern in the world that unflinchingly determined the life of human beings. Those who advocated this approach can be described (in modern terminology) as determinists. The second approach consisted in holding that everything in the world is a consequence of change and accident. We place those who subscribed to this viewpoint in the class of indeterminists or accidentalists. It is clear that the concept of dependent co-origination, as advanced by the Buddha, sought to avoid both these rival approaches. According to tradition, in his judgment the individual is not shaped arbitrarily, by chance; at the same time the Buddha also voiced his opposition to the notion that no superhuman power or divine force moulds human life. He expressed the view that human beings are shaped by a multitude of factors – hereditary, psychological, social, environmental; but, it has to be emphasized, human beings are not determined by them. To phrase it differently, the Buddha underscored the fact that the individual plays a crucial role in his or her destiny and that he or she should not be deemed a mere pawn in the clutches of a superhuman power, or the plaything of an inexorable fate.

The eminent Buddhist scholar K. N. Jayatilleke said that the phrase "dependent co-origination" is deployed in four intersecting senses (Jayatilleke, 1963). First, it is employed to signify what can be referenced as the two principles of dependent co-origination. These principles can be described in the following manner: "This being so, that is so; and this not being so, that is not so" (p. 66). In other words: whenever A, then B; whenever not A, then not B. Second, this phrase is used to

denote the two principles in a more vigorous form, as they apply to the phenomenal world. "This arising, this rises; this not arising this does not arise" (p. 78). Third, the phrase is pressed into service to delineate the causal laws that are operative in human existence. According to the Buddha, this world of existence consists of the physical or biological world, the world of thoughts and ideas, and the social, moral, and spiritual world. Fourth, the phrase is utilized in a special sense, to index the causal laws that serve to perpetuate the continued existence of the person across diverse rebirths. Indeed it is this last sense that has very often engaged the interests of the Buddhist community. From the perspective of communication, however, all four senses invite close study.

The concept of dependent co-origination constitutes the Buddhist theory of causation. This theory is intricate, and it is central to the Buddhist vision. It underscores the fact that every point-instant of reality arises in relation to an amalgamation of the point-instants that it succeeds. It can be said to arise in functional dependence on a plurality of overlapping causes and conditions that are immediately antecedent. To put in different terms, what this concept signposts is the fact that existence is inescapably dynamic, processual; it can best be understood as a chain of point-instants that are interdependent. The concept of dependent co-origination asserts that it is not possible to plausibly maintain that a cause unproblematically gives rise to an object or event. On the contrary, an object or event arises in functional dependence, together with a plurality of others. As Stcherbatsky (1958) argues, the very existence of the cause constitutes its work. If we were to ask what it is that we call "dependence of the effect upon its cause" and what it is that we call "the operation of a cause producing its effect," this concept contends that we would have to identify an effect's dependence upon a cause with the fact that the effect always follows the presence of that cause, and we would have to identify the operation of that cause with the fact that the cause invariably precedes its effect.

The concept of dependent co-origination emphatically asserts that an object or event arises as a result of a combination or multiplicity of intersecting causes. They are generally described as co-factors. As another Buddhist scholar Edward Conze observes,

> no event has one single cause, but invariably the co-operation of a multitude of conditions is involved. What is necessary for an effect to take place is that the full complement of the condition must be present. The effect itself, indeed, is nothing but the presence of the totality of its causes. (Conze, 1962, p. 81)

This idea, as I will explain later, has deep implications for the understanding of communication.

The concept of dependent co-origination vigorously argues that the relationship between cause and effect needs to be perceived as one of mutual dependence, not as a simple determination. Therefore to characterize them as cause and effect is to mis-describe them; such characterization mistakenly presupposes a clear priority or antecedence of the causes, which in Buddhist thought is definitely not the case.

The Buddha has unambiguously proclaimed that the relationship that exists between the psycho-physical individual and consciousness is one of mutual dependence – that is, the psycho-physical individual is dependent on consciousness and consciousness is dependent on the psycho-physical individual. In other words, there are no simply prior causes. This line of thinking, I am persuaded, has great implications for modern communication theory. It enables us to construct newer models and paradigms of communication that jettison mono-causality, which marks many of the Western models of communication, and it draws attention to the importance of multi-causality. What this discussion of the Buddhist concept of dependent co-origination establishes, in my judgment, is the fact that, as some Asian communication scholars have argued, concepts and presuppositions embedded in Asian traditions of thought can be harnessed to the productive re-shaping of modern communication theory.

I stated earlier that one of the consequences of the ever growing influence of mass media is the emergence of a new media reality. To be sure, technology has played a crucial role in bring this new media reality into existence. For example, the new cyberspace that has come into existence is a vital part of the new media reality and inflects it in interesting ways. As William Gibson, who coined the term "cyberspace" once said, cyberspace can be defied as "an artificial reality that projects the user into a three-dimensional space generated by computer" (Gibson, 2004, p. 34). It indexes a computer network that people make use of by plugging their brains into it. To be sure, originally cyberspace was a fictive sphere promoted by futurists. Today, however, it has assumed the status of a palpable reality and constitutes an integral part of the new media realty. What is interesting about cyberspace is that in it reality and fiction get intertwined in fascinating and complex ways. Hence one task facing modern communication theorists is to conceptualize productively this new media reality. It seems to me that Buddhism, with its privileged concept of dependent co-origination, opens a pathway to reaching this destination.

There are many facets to this newly emerging and constantly expanding media reality. For example, the distinguished cultural critic Samuel Weber has said that the greatest technological prowess of television is its ability to be there – both on the scene and in one's living room (Weber, 1996). Its being there and its being here occur simultaneously. As Weber emphatically states, if television is both here and there at the same time, then, according to traditional representations of space, time, and body, it cannot be fully or entirely either there or here. What it sets before us, in and as the television set, is therefore split, or rather it is a split or a separation that camouflages itself by taking the form of a visible image. That is the veritable significance of the expression "television coverage": the thing designated by it covers an invisible separation by giving it shape, contour, and figure. "The rendering visible of this coverage takes place before us, usually in our living room, not just in the screen but, even more, as the screen" (p. 109). This raises an important question regarding what is meant by screen generally, and what is distinctive about the television screen.

Weber suggests that a screen is basically a surface upon which light and shadow can be purposefully projected. In cinema, this appears to occur in a fairly straightforward way. Something that has already occurred is represented through its projection onto a screen. Here the temporal relationship between the past and the present, the mimetic relationship between an antecedently available original and a later copy appears to be intact. As Weber claims:

> In television, however, as with radio before it, the hierarchy implied in this relationship is severely perturbed; and consequently, the logic and ontology that govern the traditional relationship of mimesis, reproduction, and representation are unsettled. For what appears on the television screen is not a previously accomplished work but the quasi-simultaneity of another vision reproduced here and now … the minimal difference necessary to distinguish, visually or aurally, between that which is reproduced and its reproduction, model from copy, repeated from repetition, is reduced, tendentially at least, to the imperceptible. One can no longer distinguish, visually or aurally, between that which is reproduced and its reproduction. (Weber, 1996, p. 61)

Weber proceeds to observe that we cannot under these circumstances distinguish through our senses alone between what we consider to be simply transmitted live and what is reproduction. It is apparent that the television screen has become the site of confusion and border crossing between different orders of reality. As Weber interestingly remarks,

> in the uncanniness of such confusion, what Derrida has called the irreducibility of the mark – that repeatability that both allows a trait to constitute its identity while splitting it at the same time – manifests itself in the only way open to it … namely, as the undecidability of being of the televised images we see. (Weber, 1996, p. 89)

This undecidability of televised images that Weber discusses relates to complex issues of representation, mimesis, appearance, and reality, all of which are vitally connected to problems and dynamics of communication.

It is evident that a new media reality has taken shape as a consequence of the influence of mass media. As communication scholars, it is our duty to examine this new reality from diverse perspectives, so as to understand its true dimensions and assess its complexity. So far, Western communication scholars have not paid adequate attention to the complicated epistemological issues generated by this new media reality. If we are to grasp its true dimensions, we cannot afford to ignore any loner the epistemological issues connected to it. Buddhist thought can throw a valuable light on this underexplored topic. In the remainder of this chapter I wish to focus on a Buddhist work that would almost certainly enable us to sharpen our thinking on the issue of the new media reality. The work that I have in mind is Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamakarika* (*Fundamental Verses concerning the Middle Way*).

Nagarjuna, who lived somewhere between 150 and 250 AD, was a distinguished scholar of Buddhism (Dissanayake, 2007). Indeed it was his intention to illuminate some of the unclear aspects of the human meaning of Buddhism. He raised a

number of important epistemological issues by addressing such topics as time, self, language, agency, emptiness or void, relativity, causality, linguistic productivity. His magnum opus was the *Mulamadhyamakarika* – a highly complex and abstract treatise that seeks to underline the importance of these topics. I found his analyses of time, agency, and causality extremely relevant to the understanding of communication. For example, when investigating the problematic concept of time, Nagarjuna says that it has to be understood as a web of temporal relations. Similarly, the individual or the subject has to be understood in terms of the determining and productive power of language. Nagarjuna takes a very complicated, at times paradoxical attitude toward causation by emphasizing the way in which cause and effect are mutually constituted. He also points to the uncertain boundaries between appearance and reality. For him reality, rather than absoluteness, is the guiding principle. All these ideas have a direct bearing on the complex and multi-faceted media reality that occupies us here.

Earlier on I referred to the newly emergent media reality and to the undecidability of the televised image. These are complex problems for those interested in analyzing the nature and significance of this relatively new mass mediated reality. It is my contention that a work like Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamakarika* can allow us to move forward analytically with a greater measure of self-assurance and productivity. It is evident from our earlier discussion that this mediated reality can best be understood as a multiply constructed presence. What Nagarjuna says about reality and its different levels enables us to approach the modern mass mediated reality of the TV screen as a multiply constructed presence that challenges our conventional wisdom.

The mass mediated reality, then, is one topic associated with mass communication that Buddhism can help us to explore with profit. A second area of interest in this respect is the phenomenon of a communication event. Traditionally, Western communication scholars have sought to examine the relationship among communicator, message, medium, and receiver on an individual basis. However, Nagarjuna argues that we need to contextualize each of the entities associated with the process of communication. Consequently, the idea of the communicative event assumes a great measure of significance. In communication studies, up until now, it has been general practice to treat the individual communicator or receiver as the unit of analysis. Such an approach does not allow us to pay heed to the full complexity of the communication situation. Hence it is important to regard the communicative event, with its privileging of the interaction between participants, as the unit of analysis. The new mass mediated reality makes this move imperative; and it is interesting to observe that the Buddhist concept of dependent co-origination encourages such an analytical procedure.

There are two predominant features associated with the concept of dependent co-origination that clear the way for this analysis. The first is the insistence that in any event and in any human interaction there is a plurality of causes at work – or a web of causes, if you like. This is precisely what we find in a communicative event: not a single cause determining the flow of events, but a multiplicity of intersecting causes. Some of the observations and formulations of Nagarjuna that I alluded to point in this direction. To repeat, the concept of dependent co-origination

emphatically argues that the relationship between cause and effect has to be perceived as one of reciprocal dependence. Consequently, to refer to them as cause and effect would be misleading if by we meant that the cause is anterior to the effect and moves in a linear fashion. The image of a web of causes, or that of a circle of causes, is one that is advocated by Buddhism, and this line of thinking should inspire modern communication theorists.

The idea that cause and effect are mutually constituted and inescapably interactive, which is promoted by Buddhist thought, has deep implications for modern communication theory. Modern systems theorists like Ervin Laszlo have made a similar point:

> we can rationalize the issue by means of the law of causality. This law, as we maintain, has universal validity and every particular is determined by its application. Now inter-determination implies a dual relation between cause and effect; a case producing and effect and the effect acting as a cause, resulting in a further effect. A determines b and b determines a. (Laszlo, 1963, p. 27)

This line of thinking bears an uncanny resemblance to the Buddhist approach that I have discussed. As Laszlo states clearly,

> therefore, the reciprocity of causality connecting a and b consists of this: as a result of a cause emanating from a, b manifests a modification in the relations to a, which modification itself can be regarded as the cause produced by b, acting on a, and resulting from the effect of the primal cause (a acting on b). Hence, every cause gives rise to an effect and every effect in turn acts as a cause. (Laszlo, 1963, p. 32)

This avenue of inquiry, which was opened some thousands of years ago by the Buddha, should prod us into making useful forays into communication theory.

Second, the concept of dependent co-origination in particular and Buddhism in general underscore the processual nature of communication. The idea that the world is in a constant state of flux is a cardinal tenet of Buddhism. It was the normal practice among Western communication scholars to regard units in the communicative interactions as self-contained and static. It is only in recent times that this mode of thinking has been displaced by a more process-oriented approach. Some far-sighted philosophers such as Alfred Whitehead saw the validity of processual thinking many decades ago. He said, for example, that "*how* of an actual entity *becomes* constitutes *what* that actual entity *is*; so that the two descriptions of an actual entity are not independent. Its 'being' is constituted by its 'becoming.' This is the 'principle of process'" (Whitehead, 1929, p. 23). This is indeed the line of inquiry that Buddhism adumbrated thousands of years ago.

Buddhism contains within it a processual model of communication. What modern communication scholars need to do is extract it, expand it, and relate it to the pursuit of modern communication theory. Let me, somewhat schematically, delineate the difference between the Buddhist model and standard Western models. For this purpose I have selected the mathematical model of Shannon and Weaver, which has for many years exercised a profound influence on Western communication theory (see Shannon & Weaver, 1948, p. 18):

Shannon and Weaver's model	*The Buddhist model*
unidirectional	polydirectional
outcome	process
effect	reciprocity
influence	interaction
linear progression	nonlinear progression
prediction	explication
discrete variables	intersecting variables
transfer of meaning	creation of meaning
message-centered	behavior-centered
fixed sequence	flexible sequence
separable events	webs of inseparable events

So far I have discussed two areas of Buddhist thought that could purposefully illuminate and guide modern communication theory: understanding the new media reality and the importance of focusing on the notion of a communicative event. Third, I wish to focus on the Buddhist approach to language, which has a vital bearing on the understanding of the intricacies of communication theory. When we discuss modern mass media, there is an understandable tendency to focus on the visual registers as opposed to the verbal registers. However, if we are to attain a true and just picture of the complexities of communication, we need to focus on the verbal registers as well. Here Buddhism can offer us valuable insights that could be pursued with profit.

In modern communication theory, language is seen as an instrument of communication. This is, in my view, a limited and limiting view of language. Buddhism makes two important points in this regard. The first is that language does not merely transport meaning from the communicator to the receiver; it is also constitutive of meaning. In other words Buddhism shifts the emphasis from a transportational model of communication to a constitutive model. Second, Buddhism advocates the view that language should be regarded as a significant social practice; this underscores the importance of context in the generation of linguistic meaning. Both these emphases have deep implications for the study of communication. Unlike some religions that seek to establish a divine origin for language, Buddhism clearly states that language is a human product, based in practice and convention. This idea is vitally connected to the two ideas I highlighted: that language is constitutive of meaning and that it is a significant social practice.

Let us pursue this idea of language as a social practice, because it carries deep implications for the understanding of mass communication. As I stated earlier, the notion that language is based in convention and social practice is at the root of

Buddhist thinking; and it categorically rejects any divine origin of language. In texts such as the Agganna Sutta, which discusses the origins of human society, this is made evident. Buddhists believe that language has to be seen as a social practice inflected by convention and agreed upon by those who deploy that language. The Buddhist attitude to language, understood as a social practice and as a consensus-driven phenomenon, and the Buddhist concept of dependent co-origination, with its emphasis on mutual causality, serve to encircle a very important facet of communication. What one saw in Western communication theory up until recent times was a proclivity to perceive the act of communication consisting of solitary communicators and solitary receivers, and the idea was to comprehend how a message was transferred from one mind to another. This can be explained as a Cartesian legacy. What such a conceptualization ignores or downplays is the vital role played by the context of communication – the fact that linguistic communication transpires within specific contexts, which are a vital part of the generated communicative meaning.

As I asserted elsewhere,

> what the Buddhist attitude to language does is to focus on the commonly shared world that senders and receivers share and how it constitutes a very important facet of communicated meaning and the communicative event. Contexts and conventions that Buddhism focuses on are sets of practices and concerns that deepen the communicative act that is being performed. Hence the Buddhist way of re-conceptualizing verbal communication opens up very productive pathways of inquiry. (Dissanayake, 2008, p. 69)

This approach to language helps us to conceptualize mass communication better. The verbal registers, as I stated earlier, form a very important level of mass communication, and the promotion of the idea that language is a vital social practice in the way in which Buddhists have formulated it is important for fashioning more heuristically purposive modes of communication research.

What I have sought to do in this chapter is to first underline the importance of exploring Asian theories of communication as a way of extending the discursive boundaries of modern communication theory. Having done that, I focused on Buddhism as one of the great intellectual traditions of the world. My attempt was to focus on the way some of the Buddhist concepts that carry a freight of meaning linked to the study of communication – and to do this in order to gain a deeper understanding of mass communication. My going back nearly 3,000 years might sound anachronistic; but it is important that we rise above the simplistic divisions of the past and present. In discussing the ways in which Buddhist concepts could be purposefully applied to mass communication, I may have deprived them of some of their subtlety and suggestiveness; but then that is inevitable in an endeavor of this nature and it is the necessary price one has to pay when thinking outside the box and mapping uncharted territories.

In examining the relationship between Buddhist thought and mass communication I chose to focus on what I thought are three significant areas of analysis: the new media reality that has emerged in recent times; the importance of understanding

mass communication in terms of communicative events; and the Buddhist attitude to language and how it might help us to understand the nature of mass communication at a deeper level of intellectual apprehension. Admittedly, in a short chapter of this nature one cannot do full justice to the chosen terrain of inquiry. My attempt has been a more modest one – to offer certain lines of inquiry that could and should be explored in depth and detail in the future.

In this regard, seven important points made by Nagaruna in his *Mulamadhyamakarika* deserve our careful consideration. First reality has to be understood as a linguistic construct; there is no reality prior to language. In the twenty-first century we can modify that to assert that reality is a media construct; and this is what postmodernist thinkers like Jean Baudrillard persuasively argued. Second, communicative events come into being as a result of the activation of a plurality of causes. As we seek to comprehend the nature and significance of communicative acts, we need to focus on clusters of causes rather than on solitary ones. This is indeed a fact that is clearly underscored by the Buddhist concept of dependent co-origination. Third, closely related to all this is the notion that the various entities associated with communication are not self-contained and unitary but are constantly in a state if interaction. This interactivity among elements, according to Buddhist thinking, is a vital part of the communication process. Indeed, if we follow the Buddhist logic, we would realize that each entity in a communication process gains in depth and definition as a consequence of its interactions with other similar entities. Fourth, the concept of self projected by Buddhism is important. Unlike most other religions, which privilege a fixed and unitary selfhood, Buddhism contends that there is no fixed self and that it is best to understand it as a psycho-physical entity that is constantly in motion. Drawing on this cardinal tenet of Buddhism, Nagarjuna made the case that the self is illusory and is a temporary linguistic construct. We have to recognize the fact that the self denotes the imaginary register consisting of identification, narrative, tropes, images, imaginations, all of which serve to promote an idea of the individual.

Sixth, Nagarjuna, in his own idiom, raises the issue of communication codes. Western communication theory, from its very inception, has stressed the importance of having a set of commonly shared communicational codes as a means of facilitating human interaction. These codes are commonly understood; and they present an orderly and cohesive picture. This is true so far as it goes, but it does not tell the whole story. Communication codes are also marked by ambiguities, tensions, fissures, and fault lines. Miscommunication, as deconstructionists like Jacques Derrida have pointed out, is a mark of communication. What is interesting about the exegetical work of Nagarjuna is that he recognized the salience of this fact. He pointed out that the linguistic codes that members of a given collectivity share are also traversed by tensions and ambivalences. The complexities associated with communicative codes have not been dealt with adequately by modern Western communication scholars. This is indeed a terrain that invites closer investigation.

Nagarjuna's point is not that communication is not impossible; rather his contention is that communication is fraught with tensions, such that the chances of miscommunication are very great indeed; and we should pay due attention to this fact. Western communication scholars like Shannon and Weaver talked about noise in their communication models, but tis never became a central component and was not theorized adequately. The writings of Nagarjuna enable us to recognize the possibilities of miscommunication as a vital element of communication. His argument is that language, by its very nature, is self-occluding and therefore gives rise to tensions and ambiguities. As we seek to come to grips with the intricacies of modern mass communication, this line of thinking opened up by ancient Buddhist thinkers can prove to be of inestimable value.

During the past few decades mass communication has developed rapidly, largely due to the stupendous growth in communication technology. The relationships among communicators, messages, media, and receivers have become ever more complex. While mass communication, driven by technology, has made astonishing progress, our models and frameworks for understanding and reimagining these newer developments in mass communication have not advanced commensurately. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is here that Buddhist thought can alert us to some important pathways of inquiry. The intent of the present chapter is to convey this message. This message, to be sure, connects to the larger theme I started from, namely the importance of exploring, rediscovering, and reinventing Asian theories of communication as a way of widening the discursive perimeter of modern communication studies.

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Jewish Communication Theory
Biblical Law and Contemporary Media Practice

Yoel Cohen

A communication theory based on Judaism has much to contribute to a global vision of media theory and practice, despite the initial glance that might dismiss Judaism as an ancient, perhaps sequestered ideology and religion. In terms of timespan, the biblical period occurred some 4,000 years prior to the first newspapers that appeared in Europe in the seventeenth century. In terms of content, the Old Testament discusses a myriad of questions relating to man's relationship to God, including, for example, the temple sacrificial service. The Mishna and the Talmud, which provide a rabbinic interpretation of biblical laws, were themselves compiled a thousand years before the first printed newspapers appeared in Europe. While much of the Old Testament concerns Jewish ritual, the larger vision of the Old Testament reveals several communicational assumptions and claims bearing direct relevance to theoretical and ethical issues current in communications scholarship.

A closer look shows that, under the umbrella of an ontological narrative, Judaism provides a highly detailed ethical code of one's relations with one's human fellows and with God. Language, speech, and communication play a central role in Judaism. Judaism views God as infinite, and therefore the only knowledge of God that humanity enjoys is through his acts and messages. For example, God signalled his presence in the Sinai desert, through the pillar of fire and the cloud above the Israelites *en route* toward the Promised Land, after exodus from Egypt. And within the Tabernacle God communicated through the breastplate (*Hoshen*) worn by the high priest. Similarly, God's satisfaction was expressed through fire from Heaven that consumed the offerings, and through the divine presence (*Shekhinah*) inside the Tabernacle and the Temple.

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God is an activist god, both for the world and the Jewish people and for individual Jews. Given a natural desire for knowledge of God and an obligation to learn about him, the acts and messages of God constitute knowledge about him and his attributes. This state of affairs led Gruber to conclude that "language, particularly Hebrew, had a theological significance in Judaism not associated with language in another religion" (Gruber, 1999, p. 783). Hebrew is not only a language, connecting sender and receiver, but is itself power-laden; Hebrew is a holy language. Language is no less the essence of Judaism. The concept encompasses the language of creation and of revelation. The biblical account of the world being called into existence through mere divine utterance gives emphasis to this idea. Until Babel, Hebrew – that is, God's language – was spoken by all; after Babel there was an intentional confusion of languages. But the Babel incident signified not only the replacement of one single language, Hebrew, with a host of languages; it also indicated an incremental reduction in the universal supremacy of the intrinsic or inbuilt powers that the Hebrew language possessed. This event gave communication a central place in God's relationship to mankind.

Communication has a key role in the Revelation. The Bible is not just a book of laws and ethics, but the revelation of the seeds of a 4,000 year-long relationship between God and his chosen people; the entire Book of Genesis does not contain one law. In chronicling often dramatic events such as the early Israelite history in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the capture of the Promised Land of Canaan, the Bible is not very different from the news media. The Bible may have been one of the earliest messengers. Events like the Ten Plagues were a godly message to the Egyptian people, and possibly to mankind as a whole. It was therefore surprising that somebody who, according to the Book of Exodus, had a notable stutter – Moses – was chosen by God to take his people out of Egypt.

The well-known Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) is a noteworthy illustration. According to the French Jewish Bible commentator, Rashi, the Ten Commandments – an ethical code for mankind as a whole, not just for the Jewish people, and one that later formed the Noahide Code – were given in 70 languages of the world. Behind the moral mandates therein are communicational claims that cannot be divorced from the significance of "Do not steal, do not kill." For one, God speaks his mind. For two, humans are capable of hearing and rightly interpreting the meaning of God's speeches. For three, God's speech comes to humankind with non-negotiable clarity, at the same time with wide latitude in social and personal application.

The prophets have fulfilled a primary role as messengers of God (Haggai 1: 13), as witnesses of God's power and mercy. The power of the word came to express itself in the power to bless others, which on the one hand the Patriarch and Prophet Abraham used, and which Prophet Balaam, on the other hand, misused in an abortive attempt to curse the Israelites (Numbers 22: 22). Yet the prophet was more than a messenger: he was a participant standing in the presence of God (Jeremiah 15: 19). His communication was not neutral but comprised ethical monotheism or a religion of morality, raising the spiritual standards and moral fiber. Calls to public opinion were part and parcel of public life in ancient Israel. The deliverances of the

Jews from Egypt and in the Purim saga at the city of Shushan, Persia were examples of messages from God to international public opinion.

Yet the manner of persuasion in communication in Judaism is uncertain. Zulick (1992) argues that the absence of a verb "to persuade" in Hebrew suggests that the leading figure in the rhetorical act is the hearer rather than the orator. "Words carry weight. They convince [because] they are the right words, the authoritative words, and not because of the persuasive art of the orator" (Zulick, 1992, p. 368). Falk (1999) has downplayed the impressive and persuasive manner of speech, arguing that, in contrast to Greek rhetoric, Jewish rhetoric calls for polite and pleasant speech. But more recently Blum Kulka, Blondheim, and Hacohen (2002) have argued that an adversarial format – that is, a format with a marked preference for disagreement – has been a fundamental feature of the Talmudic academies over the centuries; this format had an impact even on contemporary Israeli media discourse.

After the cessation of Jewish prophetic activity in the fourth century BCE, the hidden divine meaning of events could not be conjectured any longer. Prophecy was replaced by faith as the staple ingredient in the relationship between the Jewish people and God. The creation of the state of Israel – together with later events such as a series of dramatic wars, the reunification of Jerusalem, and historical peace agreements – suggested to some the presence of a divine force. But, in the absence of prophecy, any Jewish theological study of media events is reduced to belief (e*munah*).

Communication from God contains a number of layers. First among them is the informational layer, represented for instance by the details of statements and biblical events; it is noteworthy that almost every command to Moses is accompanied by the word "to say" – to pass on or communicate to others.

The second layer is emotional; examples are the binding of Isaac, the crossing of the Red Sea, the capture of the Promised Land. In chronicling such dramatic events, the Bible is not very different from the news media. It develops an all-embracing relationship between God and his people. The spectator or reader of the Bible event, like that of a media one, becomes a passive participant in the event itself – participating in it from the serenity of the pew.

Oral prayers fulfill important roles too, by enabling the congregant to become a participant in humanity's relationship with God. The prayers can express penitence – as on the Jewish New Year and on Yom Kippur; or they can express praise – for the Exodus on Passover, for the giving of the Ten Commandments on Shavuot; or they can keep collective memory alive – for instance on Sukkoth, when they commemorate the 40-year wanderings in the Sinai desert, after exodus. Oral prayers took on added importance in the absence of sacrificial service after the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE.

The third layer of God's communication consists in values or commandments (*mitzvot*); such are the 613 positive and negative commands providing a code of spiritual and social behavior. For example, the verse "Hear O' Israel, the Lord Is Our God, the Lord Is One" (Deuteronomy 6: 4) commands belief in his omnipotence.

As an ethical religion, Judaism regulates humans' relationship with God and among themselves. The time gap between the biblical period and the modern era notwithstanding, certain principles of ethical conduct may be extrapolated from the Bible to provide guidelines of behavior in the contemporary era. Latter-day codes of Jewish religious law (*halakhah*) apply ancient principles to contemporary issues, including mass media behavior. While Judaism appears to touch directly only upon a small number of media-related issues – such as the right to privacy, social gossip, sexual modesty, and media functioning on the Sabbath – Judaism offers not only a code for the whole life, but even a theory of life. Since Jewish theological theory of communication is not merely the sum total of these and other parts, but also an all-embracing theory about communication between persons and between the individual and God, a Jewish view about mass media may be deduced from it.

Jewish Laws of Communication

The most significant biblical law concerning communication between humans is the prohibition to divulge and publish information that may damage a person's reputation (*loshon hara*). Leviticus (19: 16) warns against not being "a talebearer among your people." Korach defamed Moses by charging that Moses exploited his position vis-à-vis a woman who had nothing and was forced to give up her sheep to the priest (see the Yalkut Shimeoni commentary on Numbers, Chapter 16). There are limitations regarding communication between people.

Even the publication of information of a positive nature – gossip – is forbidden in Judaism. In the nineteenth century the Hofetz Hayyim elaborated on this, producing a fully fledged manual of forbidden speech in interpersonal communication (Ha-Cohen, 1873 = Pliskin, 1975). This challenges the Western value that gives preference to the right to know above the right to privacy. These Jewish rules of interpersonal communication have implications also for mass communication – thereby showing how Jewish communication theory has a contemporary relevance. The competitive nature of news reporting in a free and competitive media environment – an environment that draws upon source–reporter relations in which exclusive information is leaked – is problematic in Judaism.

Yet contemporary rabbis have sought to reconcile the Jewish strictures on social gossip with modern ideas of public information in a democracy and with the principle of the right to know. Chwat (1995) contrasts the views of the Hofetz Hayim with later views – such as those of Abraham Isaac Kook, chief rabbi in Palestine during the British mandate – as recognizing the role of the fourth estate in critical reporting and enabling the citizenry to be informed about those elected to power and about inappropriate behavior on the part of public officials (on these topics, see Korngott, 1993). It is no coincidence that the same verse in the Bible warning against being "a talebearer among your people…" (Leviticus 19: 16) continues: "or standing idly by the blood of your neighbor." One has an obligation to

inform society about something that is a danger to it. Indeed, the next verse says: "You shall admonish your fellow and do not bear a sin because of him." The Bible itself disclosed Moses' sin of smiting the rock instead speaking to it in order to bring forth water – which would have publicized miracle and would have been a means toward moral teaching. This tradition led one contemporary rabbi, Azriel Ariel, to articulate the Jewish religious concept of "social gossip by consent" (Ariel, 2001): elected politicians, by putting themselves forward for elected office and by being in the public eye, appreciate that they will be under public and media scrutiny. The media's role is crucial, particularly at times of election, when citizens require information about the candidates for public office and their policies. Nevertheless, even here there are limits. If media publicity can be avoided and social repair can be achieved by other means – for instance by turning to the police – this is preferable. If there is no other way, the journalist has to verify the information. Rumors are an unsatisfactory base for news reporting. Moreover, the goal of the journalist should be to be a watchdog rather than to scoop the media. In one sense, the divide between Jewish principles of reporting and the modern principle of the freedom of the press may reflect the fact that the Bible was written in an age that predated the modern media.

Strictures have an added relevance in the age of social media. Whereas in the pre-Internet era rules of reporting could be enforced on professional journalists, ordinary people blogging and using social media like Facebook may lack training or knowledge about Jewish strictures on interpersonal communication. Bloggers need to pay heed to the damage that can be caused online, where potentially thousands of people can read what has been posted. Care should also be taken in social media not to provoke criticism by bullying or insulting. The surfer should not hide behind a cloak of anonymity. The word of God applies even when one is anonymous. Other Jewish mores relevant for the social media relate to the need to protect children's privacy by not divulging personal information about them.

A related principle of Jewish media ethics is the requirement for accuracy in news reporting: a Judaistic theory of communication allows no compromise on the truthfulness of God's own speech or on its transmission to broader constituencies. The mandate "Do not lie" is itself variously treated throughout the Old Testament. Never dismissed and never subordinated to political considerations, lying is nonetheless adopted by a host of biblical characters – including, most unusually, by a prophet sent to prevaricate on the will and purpose of God (1 Kings 22). One of the sins of ten out of the twelve spies was that they added their own ideological views – their own lies – to their factual report about the Promised Land (Liebes, 1994).

According to the Book of Proverbs (12: 19), "The lip of truth shall be established forever; a lying tongue is but for a moment." So important is truth that lying is tantamount to idol worship. Modern standards in reporting accurately may draw their origins from the Bible. The requirement for accuracy is problematic when a news organization under tight deadlines faces news sources that do not give their account of events. While not generally identified as a peculiarly religious goal,

the provision of information about events and societies (which contributes to understanding and reduces conflict) is endorsed by Judaism. The limits placed on media reporting give injured parties the right to seek remuneration.

Standards of accuracy have also influenced Jewish thinking about advertising. A prohibition on deception limits the tactics that advertisers may adopt (Levine, 1981). An advertiser may focus on the good aspects of his or her product, but he is forbidden to draw attention to the weaknesses of his competitor's products.

Another media rule originating in the Bible concerns copyright. Drawing upon the eighth of the Ten Commandments and the prohibition to steal, Judaism postulates that it is necessary to safeguard not only physical property but also intellectual property. Copyright protects journalistic intellectual property (Batzri, 1986; Katz, 1988). The question of copyright protection has resurfaced in the age of computers. Given the ease of downloading texts and given the ancient Jewish legal criterion that if an owner whose property has been stolen has given up hope of it being returned, some rabbis have suggested that the property be no longer regarded as stolen and need not be returned to its owner. But other rabbis have countered that, since not all authors of texts downloaded by others from the Internet have given up their rights of ownership, copyright is also applicable to online texts.

Whereas ethical principles in Western culture have the single goal of regulating people's relations among themselves, the Bible, by espousing the view that the human being is created in God's image, promotes the ethical perfection of the individual. Therefore restrictions upon an individual's behavior toward God also impact upon media practice. The major media-related rule in Judaism in this context concerns sexual modesty. The biblical dictum that the Israelite camp in the wilderness in "which God walked shall be holy … that God should not see anything unseemly and turn himself away from you" (Deuteronomy 23: 15) is a command prohibiting sexual licentiousness. Judaism views sexual pleasure within marriage in positive terms, but it prohibits sexual freedom outside the marital framework. In Jewish thought, modesty (*tzeniut*) concerns rather the manner in which a person conducts his or her social relations. However, this concept has developed a sexual dimension, which is due in part to the sexual freedom that characterizes Western entertainment and media culture; this has, in turn, been interpreted in an extreme manner by ultra-orthodox Jewry or Haredim, whose philosophy includes constructing cultural walls to distance the Haredi Jew from nonreligious influences (Cohen, 2011). Moreover, Reform Judaism opposes the sexploitation of the woman in advertising.

Another area where Judaism regulates media behavior concerns Sabbath observance. As a celebration of God's creation of the world in seven days, as described in the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis, the fourth of the Ten Commandments requires the Jew to "observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy." The principle of Sabbath extends well beyond a specific religious obligation. Embedded in Sabbath is refreshment, restoration, rest, spiritual reflection, and general well-being. Sabbath rest is essential to human flourishing; all cultures, even professional media

culture, recognize this. Accordingly, some Jews, notably the ultra-orthodox, refrain even from reading secular literature such as newspapers on the Sabbath.

In spite of this, the definition of "work" on the Sabbath has been the subject of wide discussion among rabbis over the centuries. It has been interpreted by orthodox as well as by conservative Judaism as a prohibition against turning on electricity on the Sabbath. Accordingly, only electricity preprogrammed by a time clock mechanism prior to the Sabbath may be used – for purposes such as heating and lighting. In effect this limits the use, on the Sabbath, of electronic media like radio, television, and Internet.

The Influence of Jewish Ethics on Media Behavior

As a practical religion or as a guide to life, Judaism is unsatisfied by remaining at the declaratory level. Emphasis is placed upon the rabbis' interpretation of the 613 positive and negative commandments listed in the five books of Moses, the Torah, and upon their practical application in everyday life. The authority of God stands or falls to the extent that his words are implemented in the real world. The impact of Jewish communication theory may be evaluated at a number of levels. It is in the application that the significance of theory is visible. This means, first, the application of media ethics to the secular Israeli media; second, the application of media ethics to religious media in Israel, which are themselves divided into ultra-orthodox Haredi media and modern orthodox media; third, the application of media ethics to the community media in the Jewish diaspora; and, fourth, the application of media ethics to Islam and Christianity.

The impact of Jewish law ethics upon the wider population is visible. While 42 percent of Israeli Jews defined themselves as secular, the remaining 58 percent are religious to various degrees: 8 percent defined themselves as Haredi, 12 percent as *dati leumi* (modern orthodox), 13 percent as religious traditional, 25 percent traditional and not so religiously observant (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

It is difficult to identify the impact of Jewish ethics upon the secular Israeli media. In the popular imagination, freedom of speech is a Western invention attached to the Enlightenment, when scruples over religious law were subordinated to the right rule of reason. Freedom to contribute to the "marketplace of ideas" was a metaphor born of the seventeenth-century economic enterprise, not of tablets on Sinai. Yet the Jewish scriptures are chock full of free-speaking persons who vent their doubts, disbelief, and discontent with the ways of God, within the hearing of God. It is hard to match that with an open marketplace. The chief example is Job, who clearly does not believe he has been fairly treated and would like – in fact demands – an explanation. Israeli TV draws heavily upon cultural imports and broadcasts many films that are seen in other Western countries. Even so, its religious broadcasts department – the "Jewish tradition department," as it is officially named – airs programs of a religious nature, notably before and after Sabbath. Key news websites have sections comprising Jewish content. But generally news

outlets in Israel function in a competitive environment, where source–reporter relations are a lively seedbed of exclusive information. In Israel TV and radio function on the Sabbath and on holydays (with the exception of Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement). However, to the extent that copyright may trace its origins to the biblical prohibition on stealing, including intellectual property, a link may be made between copyright and the Jewish ethical tradition.

Jewish ethics is most visible in the religious media. Both the ultra-orthodox and the modern orthodox outlook respect the values of freedom of expression and the freedom of the press. In order to withstand the influence of the outer world, non-religious and non-Jewish, ultra-orthodox Haredi Jews have lived within cultural ghettoes. Haredi political parties and Haredi rabbis have created their own alternative newspapers and radio stations. Television is banned. As a result of religious strictures on social gossip, there is an absence of gossip columns in the Haredi media. This does not, however, stop the Haredi political parties that sponsor the daily newspapers from engaging in political recruitment on the news pages. The difference between the ultra-orthodox and the modern orthodox media may be seen in their respective applications of the biblical injunction concerning sexual modesty. While the modern orthodox frown upon nudity and upon the visual portrayal of extra-marital relations, the ultra-orthodox do not as much as print photographs of women in their media, do not broadcast women singing, and in many cases do not print the first name of Haredi women journalists in the byline (Micolson, 1990). By contrast, modern orthodoxy – which by definition seeks to reconcile religiousness with modernity – is exposed to the general media, including television and Internet, but its exponents apply self-censorship. Media literacy has become important to modern orthodoxy. A subsystem of the modern orthodox is the hardal (*haredi leumi*, nationalist Haredi), which is characterized both by strong Zionist nationalist feelings toward the Jewish state and by a desire to be more restrictive in its exposure to nonreligious culture, including to television and the Internet. The schools of the *haredi leumi* have a more selective curricula, and they oppose tourism abroad, because it entails leaving the Holyland.

One example of this concerns the non-functioning of the media in the Sabbath. There are no differences between the two branches – Jewish ultra-orthodoxy and modern orthodoxy. Moreover, the eve of Sabbath Haredi print media even have separate sections, one comprising supplements with strictly religious matter and another with general nonreligious content such as political news, to enable those who wish to be exposed only to religious matter on the Sabbath to be so exposed.

Jewish community media – including Jewish weekly newspapers, Jewish radio, and the Internet – follow Western standards.

Jewish communication theory may also have had an indirect influence on international media standards through Judaism's impact upon Christianity and Islam. This is particularly true in the case of Islam. Partly in an abortive effort to draw potential Jewish converts, Prophet Mohammed infused his new religion with Jewish rules. Jewish rules like social gossip were expanded in Islam into all-embracing codes of family honor and privacy. These standards have been adopted by different

media systems within the Arab world (Ayish & Sadig, 1997). Jewish ethics of sexual modesty may have inspired Christianity and Islam. Such values in Christianity and Islam as accurate reporting and intellectual property copyright law may also have Jewish origins. While the institution of the Sabbath has had an undoubted influence not only upon Christian and Islamic beliefs and in Christian and Islamic countries, but also among mankind as a whole, it is difficult to claim that the media-related features of the Sabbath have impacted elsewhere.

Debating Jewish Theory and Ethics

Should a Jewish theory of communication carry normative status in any culture? The practice of Jewish media ethics has become a subject of day-to-day debate in the religious public. The Bible may never have intended that what was communicated by Moses to the Israelites upon Mount Sinai should become whipping points, but since the founding fathers of Zionism the question of the relationship between Judaism and the modern democratic state has long been debated by secularists and traditionalists. More generally, issues raised have included whether personal status matters like divorce, marriage, and conversion should be in the hands of rabbinic courts. Other questions concern the government's budgeting of yeshivot (academies of Jewish learning) and deferrals of Haredim from military service. Much of the debate has been conducted on newspaper pages, broadcast airwaves and, lately, Internet blogs. Each of the national newspapers and television stations has a religion affairs reporter (Cohen, 2012).

Religion coverage and content have themselves become the subject of debate from time to time. Israeli journalists perceive pressures from religious groups as attempts to alter the secular lifestyle in Israel. Haredi media present secular Israelis as lesser, sinning Jews. For their part, Haredim criticize the secular Israeli media for constructing a negative image of Haredim, which contributes to public misunderstandings about the Haredim and their world. Some in the modern religious establishment also fail the Israeli media by not regarding the territories of Judea and Samaria – otherwise known as the West Bank – as integral parts of Israel.

The difference between a media system functioning in accordance with Jewish communication theory and one operating in accordance with Western theory frequently comes to expression in the public sphere in Israel. The following examples illustrate the clash between Jewish and Western thinking on such questions as the right to know in secular and religious media; televised comedy about religious personages; the public's right to pornography; and Sabbath public broadcasting in Israel.

1 The clash between the individual's right to privacy and the public's right to know has also extended to religion-related matters. In 2008 Barack Obama, then a presidential candidate, visited Jerusalem on an electoral campaign tour through the Middle East. He symbolically placed a prayer message in the

Western Wall (the Kotel) in Jerusalem. The *Maariv* newspaper disclosed the contents of Obama's prayer message after a yeshiva student removed the piece of paper from the Kotel and gave it to one of the newspaper's reporters. It read: "Lord – protect my family and me. Forgive my sins, and help me guard against pride and despair. Give me the wisdom to do what is right and just. And make me an instrument of Your will."[1]

The rabbi of the Western Wall, Shmuel Rabinowitz, described the removal of the note as "sacrilegious." "Notes placed in the Kotel are between the person and his Maker. Heaven forbid that one should read them or use them," he said.[2] Obama said it was a private conversation between him and God. Before the Israeli attorney general could decide whether or not to open a police investigation, the yeshiva student had returned the prayer note to the Kotel. For *Maariv*, the disclosure was newsworthy because it was interesting. Yet it raised the question of whether there was a public interest in Obama's private beliefs. Defendants of *Maariv*'s disclosure said that the American public has a right to know what influences an American presidential candidate, and this includes the nature of his religious beliefs.

2 The clash between the right to know and the right to privacy produced even greater tension in the religious media on account of the religious obligation of not causing a desecration of God's name (*hilul hashem*). For example, in 2010 a leading rabbi was alleged to have sexually molested schoolboys. Rabbi Motti Elon headed a Jerusalem yeshiva, had been the principal of a leading Jerusalem school, and had even been tipped as a future chief rabbi of Israel. His weekly religious lesson on reading the Bible drew thousands. An unofficial body comprising leading rabbis and educators from the modern religious sector called Takana (Correction) – which had been set up to deal with sexual molestation – took up these allegations with Elon, privately to begin with, and asked him to stop teaching. He left Jerusalem, moving to a northern village. But after he continued teaching, Takana decided to go public with its demand that Elon stop teaching – without giving its reasons. "We have our style," said Yehudit Shalit, a Takana member. "We are people who abide by the religious prohibition of *loshon hara* [social gossip]."[3] One secular newspaper started the scandal with a front page headline: "An earthquake in the modern religious community." While the secular media covered the story uncompromisingly, the modern religious media, respecting the religious prohibition on *loshon hara*, did so qualifiedly. Thus one detail in the mass daily *Yediot Aharonot* – "the rabbi requested that I strip. I trembled…"[4] – did not appear in the religious media. Indeed, the Haredi ultra-orthodox media ignored the story in its entirety. As for the modern religious media – with which Elon was identified – these were themselves divided in the extent to which they covered the affair. The quality *Mekor Rishon* took a liberal stance, spending over 10 pages on the affair in the weekend issue after the story broke out. By contrast, *BaSheva*, the weekly that was identified with the stricter hardal substream, relegated its coverage to a single short report, relating the affair with a sense of embarrassment and underlying skepticism.

3 Access on cable television to sex channels produced a political and judicial struggle in the Israeli Parliament, in the Knesset, and in the Israeli Supreme Court. It raised the question of freedom of expression in a Jewish country. Cable television arrived in Israel in 2000. Fifty percent of cable television subscribers in Israel receive cable packages that include sex channels.[5] In 2001 religious political parties, together with Arab political parties, and feminist Knesset members passed a law in the Knesset under which cable television would not broadcast sex channels. A year later Zevulun Orlev from the then National Religious Party, which was identified with the modern orthodox sector, succeeded in widening this law to include even those channels where only a small part of the programming had sexual content. And later that year the ban was extended to the Playboy channel. Quoting the biblical passage of Noah's Ark before the Flood (Genesis 6: 11), a Shas Haredi party Knesset member said that the country is full of violence. But Abraham Poratz of the secular left-wing Meretz party said that the campaign against pornography should be made via education and public discussion, not censorship. But what was achieved at the parliamentary level failed the scrutiny of the law courts. The cable companies appealed the courts against the Playboy ban; and the courts relaxed the ban, allowing the channel to be broadcast, but in a restricted time frame, from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Pornography merited the constitutional protection of the right to freedom of expression, the majority Supreme Court ruling said. There was, however, a different minority opinion, expressed by one judge, Yaacov Turkel, who said that "naked women, shown in programmes – not in the framework of a documentary – become an object for sexual use."[6] The judicial ruling may have limited the impact of a conglomerate of small parties in the Knesset and may have brought Israel back into line with other progressive democratic countries, but it left unresolved the dilemma of reconciling the democratic state with its Jewish roots.

4 A variation on the dilemma of freedom of expression was the controversy over a stand-up comic who mimicked biblical characters. In the 1990s Gil Kopatch had a regular spot on Israeli TV on Friday nights – a peak viewing time – in which he presented an irreverent contemporary interpretation of the weekly Bible reading in synagogues. For example, the matriarch Sarah was presented by Kopatch as a lightheaded and humor-laden woman who makes the life of her Egyptian maid, Hagar, a misery before firing her. In another program, drawing upon the Biblical verse "Noah drank the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent," Kopatch said that Noah was

> not only bombed out of his mind, he probably danced in his tent and did a striptease. Ham saw his father's nakedness. Apparently, Noah was a bit of an exhibitionist. He liked dancing with his willy hanging out. The amazing thing in this is that he was about 600 years old. Ham saw and got a shock. You ask yourself, what's so shocking about the willy of a 600-year-old man? And Ham, of all people, who was the ancestral father of the blacks.[7]

The fact that religious groups do not watch TV on the eve of Sabbath did not stop them from protesting against Kopatch. One Shas Knesset member, Shlomo

Benizri, said that Kopatch "was trampling with arrogance and contempt upon every Jewish thing that is sacred." Kopatch replied: "Nobody can tell me what to think. God wants thinking people, not those who follow their rabbi without asking questions."[8] The issue divided the Israeli Jewish public, leaving unresolved the problem of the right to self-expression on religion. A public opinion poll found that wide differences existed among Israeli Jews about the Kopatch spot: 49 percent of the religious Israelis, 27 percent of the traditional Israeli Jews, and 17 percent of the secular Israeli Jews surveyed said that the spot should be cancelled from the program, whereas 70 percent of the secular Israeli Jews, 60 percent of the traditional Jews, and 24 percent of the religious Jews surveyed said that there was no need to cancel the segment.[9]

5 By contrast to the questions of freedom of expression, the question of public broadcasting in Israel on the Sabbath day challenged the status quo between the secular community and the religious community. It revisited the long-debated question of whether public places of entertainment should be closed on the Sabbath. Yet public broadcasting is an integral part of the Sabbath in Israel, where Saturday has been the only rest day. Sixty-five percent of Israeli Jews watched television or listened to the radio on the Sabbath, according to a 2009 survey. This figure includes traditional but not strictly observant Jews: Of those who always light candles on Sabbath eve or recite the *kiddush* blessing over the wine at the festive Sabbath meal, only 47 percent never watch television or listen to the radio on the Sabbath (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009). But, given that turning on the electricity on the Sabbath is forbidden in Jewish religious law, the religious political parties opposed Sabbath public broadcasting, seeing it as inappropriate for the religious face of the Jewish state. Already in 1969, shortly after the inauguration of Israel TV, the National Religious Party conditioned its joining the coalition government upon there being no broadcasting on the Sabbath. However, after a citizen on a Friday night appealed to the Supreme Court judge on weekend duty, Israel Television TV was instructed to provide Sabbath broadcasting. This was limited to Friday evenings. Later, during the 1990–1991 Gulf War, when Israel was targeted by Iraq with 39 missiles, Israel radio and television did play a key role by broadcasting 24 hours a day; these transmissions included the Saturday army announcements for the population to enter safe areas during missile attacks. When the war was over, some attempted to continue with the television broadcasts on the Sabbath – not only on Friday nights but now even on Saturdays – but the ministers of communication and education, both of whom represented religious political parties, resisted these attempts.

Debate in Israel on media ethics, both in the media and among the public, became an educational experience, as it generated discussion of ancient texts on the subject, and therefore public awareness of them. If religion in traditional societies was based upon authority vested in religious bodies, in complex industrial societies there is increased emphasis upon personal choice in moral and religious matters,

religious and spiritual issues being increasingly mediated through print and electronic technologies. What cannot be digitized and reformatted cannot be real, or worth hearing, or relevant.

To be true, much of the debate inside Israel about Jewish media ethics has arisen more as a challenge to Western media values than as a challenge to Jewish media values. The Israeli media see themselves as Western democratic media. Nevertheless, the image of secular media in a Western secular system under threat from religious interests is too sweeping. While David ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, and the Mapai Labor movement, which dominated Israeli politics uninterruptedly from the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948 to 1977, sought to paint a secular brush on the modern state, Israel has moved to the right and has become more traditional in its sociological makeup. News organizations are conscious of this. "Secular" newspapers have a Friday Sabbath eve column on the weekly Bible reading. The public model of broadcasting that exists in Israel involves public figures, including representatives of the religious political parties, on the governing boards of the key broadcasting companies. Broadcasts play religious and traditional music and shows with Jewish religious cultural content. Religious holidays are a time for Jewish historical program content. Whereas in the past journalists who happened to be religious were inclined to divert attention away from their religiosity and to take on, almost apologetically, the norms of their liberal and secular colleagues, some religious journalists are today unabashed in their religiousness, and skullcaps on screen are becoming *de rigueur* for religious male journalists.

Media patterns in Israel have become less homogeneous, and religious audiences once deprived are finding their needs met in traditional sectorial media that sometimes appear to be as professionally produced as the secular media. Since the 1980s, the Haredi print media have become enlivened through the addition of independent weekly Haredi news magazines. But religious media are themselves also an educational forum for the application of Jewish media ethics. The question of the right to know has come up in the religious media in stories of corruption in religious institutions or embarrassing behavior by rabbis. Indeed the principles of the freedom of the press have disheveled the hierarchy of rabbis, whose attempts to censor their own media not only encouraged the independent weekly news magazines but also resulted in the apparition of Haredi Internet news websites.

Long-term trends toward Jewish renewal in Israel suggest a lively debate on Jewish media ethics. Norris and Inglehart (2004) argue that, rather than sounding the death knell on secularization theory, we should redefine religious trends. The 2009 social survey of Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (7,500 respondents) on religious belief among the Israeli population confirmed the trend toward religious observance. Twenty-one percent of the Israeli Jewish population said that they were more observant today than in the past, in contrast to 14 percent who said that they were less observant today than in the past. Twenty-five percent of Israeli Jews said that they adhered to tradition "to a very great extent"; 38 percent

"to a great extent," and 31 percent "to a little extent." Only 6 percent replied "not at all." Eighty-six percent of those who said that they were secular observed some level of tradition; only 14 percent of the secular observed no tradition at all. The number of Israeli Jews describing themselves as Haredi was greater among the younger population: 14 percent of those aged 20–29 defined themselves as Haredi, in contrast to only 2 percent of those aged 65 and above. An incremental decline in the future in the number of secular Israelis was suggested: 38 percent of those aged 20–29 defined themselves as secular, in contrast to 43 percent aged above 65.

Yet, even if the influence of Jewish theory about media behavior may be felt implicitly, it would be wrong to suggest that the mainstream Israeli media have explicitly taken on board Jewish media ethics as the primary ethical mechanism of journalistic behavior. The lack of consensus on media ethics notwithstanding, the different and clashing expectations between secular, modern religious, and ultra-orthodox Jews about how each group envisages media behavior contributes to creating a constructive ambiguity. For example, the creation of separate sectorial Haredi media provides Haredim with media that are attuned to their religious outlook. Behind the Knesset's creation of separate radio channels for the ultra-orthodox and modern orthodox religious communities is an attempt to institutionalize the ambiguity. Religious audiences would be able to enjoy their own religious stations, which broadcast in a manner appropriate to the various religious sensitivities. And, just as the status quo in secular–religious relations in Israel is subject to multiple interpretations, so is the debate about Jewish media ethics. At first sight, in a controversy about media conduct, the aggrieved party appeals to the status quo (or sometimes both sides do), maintaining that the other side is violating its provisions. One way to reconcile different interpretations has been for the media and their audiences to create double or triple meanings about rights and obligations – producing a constructive ambiguity – *albeit* in conflict with the Jewish principle that the very interpretation and practical application of religious ethics should not be subject to doubt.

Notes

1 *Maariv*, July 25, 2008.
2 *Maariv*, July 25, 2008.
3 *Mekor Rishon*, February 19, 2010.
4 *Yediot Aharonot*, February 16, 2010.
5 *Jerusalem Post*, August 7, 2001.
6 *Haaretz*, March 5, 2004.
7 *Jerusalem Post*, November 8, 1986.
8 *Yerushalayim*, December 12, 1997.
9 *Yediot Aharonot*, November 8, 1996.

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47

God Still Speaks
A Christian Theory of Communication

P. Mark Fackler

Evolutionary biologist Mark Changizi opines that music and language were among the earliest adaptations distinguishing humans from apes. Imitations of the sound of solid objects colliding generated the languages, and music springs from the sound of human movement. Frogs croak, wolves howl, birds chirp, humans sing. Only the last activity makes culture, that is, creates sound combinations based on previous creations, then compiles, saves, and critiques them (Changizi, 2011).

These ancient permutations should not surprise anyone familiar with the saga of humankind told in the Old Testament. Genesis reports that, immediately after creation, God declared, if only to himself, the goodness of light, sky, land and water, vegetation, and finally the goodness of the uniquely formed and troublesome first human pair, to whom the First Speaker gave "our image, our likeness" (Genesis 1: 26).[1] The meaning of *imago Dei* has a long academic history, but among the more serious contenders to rendering the phrase's meaning is the notion of symbolic communication, the capacity to create novel, meaningful sentences through sounds and symbols that bear socially negotiated meaning and content.

A Christian theory of communication begins with the confessional claim that God speaks. His uniquely effective speech carries creational, judicial, and redemptive power. Culture, which depends on creative speech as its common cause (Fortner, 2007, p. 72), was God's first mandate (Genesis 1: 28). Culture is made through tools and art, but managed and interpreted through shared words. Even the tools of culture are so managed; even the meaning of culture. The cultural mandate, the first imperative spoken in the newly formed universe, assumes the capacity – and necessity – of virtuous speech.

As the Bible begins with a report that deity deems the material world to be good (Genesis 1: 10ff.), so it ends in declarations concerning a "new Heaven" and a

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"new earth" (Revelation 21–22), the original creation having been remade without the virus of rebellion against the goodness declared the first time round. Between the beginning and the end of these divine articulations are numerous accounts of communicative interactions, including speeches from animals and from persons on the social periphery; these contain the unlikely threat that insufficient human speech will elicit substitute discourse from inanimate matter (Luke 19: 40). The Bible's account of humanity and materiality is chock full of messages, symbols, celebrations, and sound. Indeed the media of divine discourse include many sorts of happenings: dreams, visions, burning bushes, droughts, national calamities, and words (Wolterstorff, 1995, p. 38).

This chapter will attempt a Christian theory of communication: in other words, an account of the phenomena of meaningful symbol making drawn from the Christian scriptures and informed by ecumenical sources, which show us how the Christian church has endeavored to interpret the 66 books that comprise the Bible.

Not all Christian communities will be satisfied with this account. Time has allowed for many diverse families within Christendom, some contending over disputed passages, some refusing the rituals of membership to those in disagreement, some contesting the authenticity of this biblical source or that.

All Christians agree that the fundamental communicative act of all history and for all places and peoples is the appearance of the *logos* ("word") of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth: the Word. The significance of Jesus as the apex of divine–human discourse cannot be understated; in fact this singular person becomes the element that distinguishes a Christian theory of communication from any other, religiously based or not. Let us say from the start that a Christian account of communication must interpret the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus as decisive to an account of humanity, its values and dignity, its shortfalls and its hope. The "bonds of love" that constitute every effort toward mutuality and the depths of mystery that every human person in his or her most intense moments seeks to understand require language, symbol, cognition, affect, articulation, and a phenomenon called faith (*pistis*).[2] A Christian theory of communication must account for all this, because human experience entails all this. The chapter's three parts will start with a review of divine–human discourse as reported in the Bible, then the argument will focus on Jesus as *logos*, and finally I shall make a comment on what such an account might mean to specialists in communications professions and scholarship.

This chapter, with its word-length restrictions, is insufficient to address the significant objections likely to be raised from many quarters of communications scholarship (and allied disciplines) to the alarming impertinence of a Christian theory of communications. From Enlightenment rationalists and empirically minded naturalists will come objections to a need for, or even desirability of, postulating any divine discourse at all. From postmodernists will come a modicum of permission, within established boundaries and on condition of brevity. From humanists will come the furtive glances given to all mystics who enter the marketplace of ideas. To all learned critics, a summer meadow is multicolored. The intellectual history of all

disciplines proceeds in a complex mosaic – it is the rise and fall of empires of ideas. The simple claim that God speaks in ways that may be known and ought to be obeyed is audacious in the sense that it entails an ontology under siege. Yet commonplace among Christians, Jews, and Muslims (and others) is the belief that God commands, promises, blesses, forgives, exhorts, assures – and all this in communicable ways. These divine capacities are "fundamental in the religious thought of these communities" (Wolterstorff, 1995, p. 8), yet still confounding and confrontational.

Verstehen Begins

Before God spoke, the Bible says, all was void and chaos, unformed, unordered.[3] With this, the Bible admits the impossibility of contemplating nothingness and the necessity – the divine imperative – of naming the world. From its first moment, the earth aspires: there is quest, if not hunger, for order and meaning. In geologic time, ages come and go, brute matter responding to the physics of nature, unthinkingly, furiously, without regard. If by chance one's genes were froggish, so be it, or human, it happens thus – no design, no purpose, nothing but physics and chemistry making their way, and whatever humankind can make of it (Gould, 1999, p. 191).

In biblical time, there is no "there" without moral or aesthetic interpretation, the fruit of consciousness and passion, intellect and language. These judgments begin with God and are bequeathed to those special two, the man and the woman, Adam and Eve. Their ability is quickly engaged by moral evil in a quietly pastoral setting, with tumultuous consequences. They listen to the wrong speaker, the serpent, Satan. Wrong listening is the trigger that violates divine rule; but, to be fair and quite human, wrong listening is equally an expression of innate curiosity. Adam and Eve eat the forbidden apple. Divine–human communication is broken; the two image bearers may no longer commune in the Garden with the God who speaks. They are cast out. They and their children will hear God's voice again, but indirectly, and rarely so clearly. The fog of broken faith now requires mediation between wisdom and inquiry. *Verstehen* – understanding – is toil, experimentation, and always partial. Later, in the account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 9), syntax and grammar are mangled and reassembled to the point where communities must seek shelter from each other. The gift of communication itself is shattered. Neighbors can no longer share meanings or establish trust. The symbolic world becomes largely incomprehensible. Except for this: people are still talking, opaque meanings are still – with great labor – deciphered, and, within grammar, enclaves, singers, and poets still name the world.

A People Forms

Dramatically, the voice of God comes to a man of considerable success, many cattle, but no children. This unfortunate circumstance seems not to have generated bitterness against the fates, for Abram worshipped regularly and with purpose

(Genesis 12). The gods to whom he offered sacrifice seemed his best hope. They had mouths, which Abram no doubt imagined would open to him some day, but they were, for all his coaxing, totally mute. Nonetheless he persisted; life demanded it. All the cattle in the world did not compensate for the absence of children in his world, sons in particular.

Then one day Abram heard a voice.[4] The message was much more than Abram had sought in all his religious discipline. The voice of God told Abram that he would have his progeny – not one, but a full nation, and not middlers struggling to scratch out a living, but a great nation of offspring blessed by the speaking God.

Hearing with unmistakable clarity, the remarkable Abraham follows the guidance he receives (Genesis 12). On several stunning occasions, he responds to God's *ruach* ("breath, power, voice" in Hebrew) with hope, faith, and action. His son was born – hilariously, to his aged wife Sarai, later Sarah; and Abraham – these name changes signal *pistis* – became the father of the Hebrew people, whose story of not listening to "the voice" constitutes much of the Old Testament. Eventually Abraham's family is driven by famine to Egypt, where it begins to identify as an oppressed people, slaving at Pharaoh's pleasure. The voice grows dim as the Hebrews wail the age-old question: God, why silence? Where is hope? Justice and love?

A Hebrew slave girl hears the voice and hides her newborn in a basket – the baby named Moses. He will hear God speak many times, changing history for these Hebrew people and for everyone.

In Exodus God speaks most publicly, by flame and cloud; but, to Moses, he speaks still in discernible language. Moses leads these people to the Promised Land, indeed the place where God's shalom may be rediscovered – a partial return to the life known in Eden, where God will "live among them" (Exodus 25: 8). Later on the Hebrew clans coalesce into a monarchy led by David, poet and singer, celebrity, warrior, and king. His son Solomon built a temple and a luxury state house, collected precious metals and beautiful women, gained a reputation for wisdom; but in later years the voice of God dims and the monarchy turns dictatorial, autonomous, and hard of hearing.

Several generations later the culture chiefs' ears have calcified and God's voice becomes "royal-temple ideology," which veers so dramatically from *pistis* that the temple and the monarchy are both demolished with God's direct approval, in 595 BC and 587 BC, by Babylonian armies (Brueggemann, 1998, p. 11). Pagan power did the inconceivable, only because the voice rendered a verdict that was (to the culture) inconceivable: infidelity breaks the bond. Only some of the prophets heard with any capacity, and Babylon ruled.

But wait. Something about the divine voice cannot not speak. The silence of disappointment and the thunder of judgment become the whisper of reconciliation. To the ear of Persian Emperor Cyrus came a word: mercy. He allows a caravan of Hebrews to return to "their land" and rebuild their temple (Ezra 1). Most Hebrews have accommodated their immigrant status in old Babylon and cannot hear God speak. Solomon's wealth is long gone, the temple is in ruins, but a small corps of

re-settlers begins the ancient project again. Momentum is slow, resistance strong, but the voice of God and active listening resume – for a time. Then a centuries-long oral–aural status quo suggests that God is again done with speech, until … another young mother is told (by an angel, God's messenger) that in her womb is the announcer of a new outburst of divine speech. The child's name is John and his mission is to call people to repent, believe, and be baptized (Luke 1).

Messiah Becomes *logos*

John the Baptist, coarse and crude by common standards of the time, nonetheless sings the prelude to God's fullest disclosure and most strategically voiced Word, the one born to Mary (thus John's cousin). He is called Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us.

Jesus of Nazareth – God's messiah (that is, priest, king, or savior anointed with holy oil) and hence "the anointed one," *Christos* in ancient Greek – speaks the Word of God as it has never before been spoken. Priests and prophets had their day. Now one who comes from the presence of God, called the Son of God but confessed to be one essence with God, will speak in a cadence and with an authority heretofore unheard. His is "the natural voice of God" (Webb, 2004, p. 69).

Four gospels ("good news," *euangelia* – which was often military news in the ancient world) describe the life and teachings of Jesus. Matthew includes Jesus' long discourse, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–6), wherein we find the core of Christian moral teaching. Mark's Gospel is likely the first one to be written and in many ways the most terse, foregoing Luke's long narrative of birth and ending with Jesus' followers (women all, in this narrative) amazed and disoriented. Mark's odd ending intends to show that divine discourse is not closed-ended; often its meaning must be established in experience, through *pistis* – faithful following, walking in communion with, exploring the message in dialogue and deed. Luke's Gospel reflects a physician's attention to significant detail and eye for core issues: the contentiousness of Jesus' message, the failure of most listeners to understand it, the shocking conclusion to Jesus' itinerancy, and then the more shocking extension of it, a kind of eternal addendum.

John (not the Baptist, but the "beloved disciple") begins his Gospel by positing the equivalency of Jesus and *logos*, divine word–wisdom–message. *Logos* does not come in the form of a dictated treatise, a manual with bullet points, or a curriculum ontological. It comes in the form of a living person and the invitation to align with this person as a way toward *verstehen* (understanding) and shalom (completeness). Jesus is the light of the world (John 1: 4). The light illumines a path; it does not establish a university or a publishing house. Jesus is not a teacher trying to found a religious school; he is, astoundingly – even to those who traveled with him – a door to God, a gateway to the divine presence, and, turning expectations on their metaphorical heads, a servant. This should (and did) amaze: the messiah of God is a servant to humankind. The rabbi (teacher) washes the dusty feet of his listeners (John 13: 5) and, without changing roles, commands evil powers to

retreat from the presence of God's word (Luke 8: 26ff.). He instructs all who seek a relationship with him (*pistis*) to break long-established cultural precedents and to help people in need, without looking at gender or class (Luke 10: 25). He insists on several occasions that his message is essentially the coming of the Kingdom of God promised in the Jewish scriptures, yet with a dimension heretofore not emphasized.

Jesus' message will be amplified by "God coming alongside," the Paraclete (*Parakletes*) (John 14: 15ff.), the Holy Spirit. This divine amplifier of the *logos*-messiah was certified as God by the First Council of Nicea in AD 325 and by the First Council of Constantinople in AD 381. God in Christian theology is a trinity, a three-in-one essence. It was this triune God who spoke at creation, who issued Torah commands to Moses, and who inspired the prophets. Jesus was and is the *logos* enfleshed, executed under Rome's governance but risen from deadness by supernatural means. The New Testament (Acts 1) reports that Jesus' last audible words were spoken to disciples who witnessed his ascension to heaven, to God's presence, after which the voice is mediated by the Holy Spirit. These are the broad strokes of the Christian story – a communicative marvel in several dimensions.

Who Is Listening?

Competition to be in the audience of a speech from beyond comes early in the Bible story. A serpent speaks to primal man and woman, urging them to question and resist God's expressed will. The snake incentivizes this primal couple with the prospect of achieving divine status themselves (Genesis 3: 5), which proves to be a spurious, tragically false offer. For their act of abusing the ears, the man and the woman are forced to vacate their garden home and to suffer the misfortunes, indeed the pains and insecurities, of the human condition. Included in their punishment are barriers to hearing God, filters and distortions resulting from their expulsion from God's immediate presence. Difficult to hear as God's speech will be from this point on, it is yet so imperative that God's word be heard that, should the intended human audience finally refuse to listen, inanimate stones – field rocks, as still as anything in nature – would themselves form a choir, echoing the majesty of God's words (Luke 19: 40).

The primal failure to hear is repeated throughout the Old Testament. The people rescued from slavery in Egypt, initially arid listeners, go tone-deaf, losing all connection through the early Christian era. The Book of Hebrews is a sermon urging its audience to listen while the chance to hear is still available. "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3: 15).

Some hear, often after misstarts. Simon Peter, the disciple credited with founding the Christian movement, was close to Jesus but so erratic that at one point Jesus fiercely rebuked him in the most harsh language (Mark 8: 33). The great missionary Paul was a warrior against Jesus' word until he was surrounded and

overcome by its forcefulness while journeying to suppress it (Acts 9). Many examples of competent listening assure Bible readers that people of all levels of religious aptitude are able to hear. Understanding may be gradual or immediate. God's words may be audible or perceived, ignored or obeyed, but no one is excused from the responsibility to listen or foreclosed from hearing. All people can and should hear; all can and should respond with *pistis*.

Range and Duration

The great mandate of the Christian movement is to provide culturally sensitive editions of God's word to all peoples everywhere (Matthew 28: 18). The right of refusal is to be respected, but the difficulty of diffusion is never to be an excuse for a limiting vision. No social or biological trait forecloses the need to hear. No political or religious obstacle may dissuade Jesus' followers from this mission. So important is the message that life itself cannot compete as a priority (Mark 8: 35).

God alone will determine when this sending function is complete. At that time, creation will be thoroughly transformed. Conscious life will persist, but the conditions of life will take on permanently durable and deeply joyful dimensions.

The Bible provides only a few hints concerning this new and future era, but God's word, then unimpeded by human indifference or objection, will become a "presence" in the sense captured best by Walter Ong in his study of the shifting sensorium of times and cultures (Ong, 1967, p. 1). By implication, the Word's meaning will be clear, yet still complex; listeners' aptitudes will be limitless; the rule, certitude, and finality of this Word will be universally acknowledged (Psalm 2: 8). In combative terms, the Word will triumph. In terms of the perplexities of the human quest, the Word will explain. About moral quandaries, the Word will clarify. All the while the Word will be infinitely personal. Long lectures are not the projected plan.

Perhaps this picture of the Word at the end of history is best anticipated in terms of its most respected opponents. Will the considerable intellectual reservations of Bertrand Russell be fully answered? Will the feisty and seemingly God-fearless objections of Christopher Hitchens be mollified? Will the tragic distortions of Adolf Hitler be fully corrected? Even to these famous critics of the Word, its majesty will be crystal clear, the church confesses.

Why, then, is the Word so murky now? Twisted by the hypocrisy of priests and scholars. Tainted by the inconsistencies of half-convinced messengers. Falsified by comedians. Turned obnoxious by bigots. Why is this Word so hard to believe?

The Bible answers, just listen. God will enable. God will speak through the din. Indeed, the initiative and eventual clarity must of necessity be a result of the power of divine speech itself. If the legacy of Descartes requires an absolutely precise correspondence between object and linguistic sign for meaning to be possible, the divine Word in a Christian theory of communication requires

> fidelity to Jesus Christ, who alone signifies the fulfillment and perfection of meaning … The fragmentary meanings we can acquire on our own lead only to confusion unless they are united with the source and goal of all meaning, the divine *sophia*, the wisdom of God … Meaning in this sense is a gift, not an achievement. It is something we can hope and pray for, not something we can attain on the basis of our own ingenuity and diligence. (Bloesch, 1992, p. 103)

This is not to say that hearing is the easy endpoint of a predictable process. T. M. Luhrmann has studied the phenomenon of "hearing" God's voice among contemporary Christians known for avid listening and enthusiastic reporting. She comes to the research with a theory of

> attentional learning – that the way you pay attention determines your experience of God … that people learn specific ways of attending to their minds and their emotions to find evidence of God … and as a result, they begin to experience a real, external, interacting living presence. (Luhrmann, 2012, p. xxi)

Jonathan Haidt, tracking evolutionary developments in the human psyche, concludes that groups "create supernatural beings not to explain the universe but to order their societies" (Haidt, 2012, p. 12).

These observations are the naturalists' option to the near universal phenomenon of God-consciousness. The psychosocial interpretations of divine–human messaging cohere, leading in part to a theory of communication congruent with the Bible's own report of successful hearing. "From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you" (Deuteronomy 4: 36). Worship is an act of hearing, practiced not as a requirement for membership in the Listeners' tribe, but in order to train the mind and the emotions to find the living presence Luhrmann posits. Reinstra, noticing the same phenomenon reported by Luhrmann together with the latter's proper regard for the doubt that challenges all claims to divine speech, observes:

> Worship points to a reality that transcends history as well as our current place and time; training our souls to perceive this requires a flexible tension between the particular expressions of this age and the wisdom of the church's history … Worship ought to be bilingual. (Reinstra, 2005, p. 172)

Psychotherapist David Benner adds that "soul (where we humans transform events into experience and make meaning possible) invites us to find the transcendent in the mundane, the sacred in the shadow" (Benner, 2012, pp. 121–122).

In light of, and coherently with, cultural and psychological phenomena, hearing emerges, then, as the central obligation of humankind with respect to divine speech and as the primary reason for humanity's disappointments and agonies over the fidelity of divine speech. Hearing is a project of regular failure, if you count the records throughout the Bible. Most leaders of Israel are frozen-eared. Even the greatest of listeners – here David comes to mind – is stone-deaf when he wants

to be. The prophets hear well, often reluctantly. The psalms are full of frustrated listeners claiming that the divine voice is too distant, too quiet.

Yet hearing is not as difficult as these testimonials suggest, nor is it so clothed in layers of psychological self-suggestion as the Enlightenment mind insists. University of Southern California philosopher Dallas Willard has compiled accounts of successful hearing and from such accounts has adduced guidelines (not in manual form, but advisory) for hearing divine speech (Willard, 1999, p. 23). Citing examples such as Augustine, Theresa of Avila, St. Francis of Assisi, and Martin Luther, as well as contemporaries, he corroborates their reports with enabling prophecies such as Isaiah 58: 9–11: "Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am … The Lord will guide you continually" (Willard, 1999, p. 21).

Communications scholar Quentin Schultze insists that properly interpreting the meaning of divine speech must be a communal activity; the risks of misinterpretation are formidable, and individuals ought not imagine that messages from God to the individual conscience should be privately held or enacted. Symbolic ambiguity requires mature interpretive communities. Go public, listen to a group's wise listening, then, in *pistis*, do something (Schultze, 2000, pp. 61–72).

At this point skeptics may reasonably beg for space to make a case that all of this talk of sending and receiving messages, God to humankind and back again, via speech in the practice of prayer, is smoke and mirrors. Humans have conjured remarkable notions that are properly regarded as primeval vestiges of survival instincts, not actual communication events in which an invisible being successfully penetrates the veil between space–time with symbolic utterances helpful for a flourishing life. Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud are the standard bearers of modernity, not Jeremiah or John the Baptist.

At the risk of oversimplifying, allow these three objections to the entire project of divine communication:

First, the claim that God speaks is an ancient myth entirely beyond the control beliefs of the modern world, or postmodern, or post-postmodern … it is indeed sometimes difficult to keep up. Charles Taylor asks the important question: Why is it impossible for persons in Western society circa 1500 not to believe in God, while in 2000 many find unbelief easy and commonplace? (Taylor, 2007, p. 25). The Bible's own account of unbelief is quite up to date in this respect. The profiles of many biblical personages include indifference, skepticism, and outright rejection of the divine voice and person. The fifth-century king of Judah, Jehoiakim, responded to God's voice: "Burn the rubbish, arrest the propangandists, pass the pastries" (Jeremiah 36: 23–26, paraphrased). While surrounded by a relatively strong believing culture, this monarch was a thoroughly modern "cultured despiser."[5] Many so minded preceded Jehoiakim – and Schleiermacher, for that matter; and many have succeeded them. Alternative readings to that of the divine voice as revelation enjoy considerable academic prestige.

Second, a reasonable objection to divine–human communication engages the complexity of diverse world religions, all with varying degrees of emphasis on

God-talk and hearing. By what epistemological bill of rights should any one religion be favored with the *actual* capacity to hear or discern the divine voice? Eboo Patel of Harvard Divinity School sums up common sensitivities:

> Many paths up the mountain all lead to the same goal; the water in the different wells all comes from the same course; if we are to have peace in the world, we must accept the validity of other people's faiths; no single religion is large enough to hold me – I need to practice more than one to feel complete. (Patel, 2012, p. 2)

Leslie Newbigin says that the Christian paradigm resists such all-inclusive monism, as it does pantheism and panentheism. Yet at creation God gave the world "a measure of independence" that constrains all human effort, including Christian effort, from final declarations on what symbols mean (Newbigin, 1989, p. 70).

A third reasonable objection to the thesis herein presented is the problem of a breakthrough, a movement from skepticism to *pistis*. How could any person, not hearing God, ever "break through" to hear? It is not an ear-piecing problem, after all. Technology offers insufficient help. N. T. Wright (2006) suggests that "echoes of a voice" are everywhere present, without extraordinary effort or much *pistis*. Right before us, on common human ground, are the echoes: in the longing for justice, in the quest for spirituality, in the hunger for relationships, and in the delight in beauty. Consider these the opening movements of a symphony, and wait for further movements that "produce echoes of a different sort," Wright advises (p. x). Mindful critics will object, others will hear the history of every period testify. What of it, then? Does a Christian theory matter?

Communications Scholarship

It matters immensely, if it is true. This chapter does not hope to "prove" that point in a scientific sense, with irrefutable evidence eliminating alternative options. The *pistis* that hearing enables is not born by that kind of evidence or technique. At some point, however, they must show its relevance. A Christian theory leans decidedly toward a sensorium favoring the power of sound and the responsibility of transparent response.

Students of oral culture consider Walter Ong a patron saint-scholar. For Ong, voice and sound take sensory priority over sight and smell. Sound is more than decibel and signal; indeed the experience of sound and voice is itself poetry, agonistic confrontation, and memory. In *Orality and Literacy*, Ong described communities that rehearsed values in couplets (enchanted evening, healthy body, hard-core attitude). Songs are memorized by everyone and sung as community recreation. One can easily imagine the Psalms being communicated and celebrated this way, where reasons for life itself emerge from the oral celebrations of God's voice heard. If by day the people till their soil and beat back the locusts, by night they gather to celebrate and imagine, to reckon the passing of time, and to probe

the mystery of creation. Hours of daylight have their cadence; hours of darkness their mutuality and community making. James Carey applied these themes to public institutions and media, with their immense potential for building the social gridlines of the public sphere (Carey, 1989).

Could a redeemed orality – genuine dialogue, the honest question, humor revealing pretensions, reports cognizant of inherent shortcomings – reverse the ennui of social division, racism, or class suspicion and recover the tropes of love and justice woven through the Old and the New Testament? Where efficiency drives interaction, is there a chance for authenticity, encounter – for knowing the "other," in Levinas's terms? Ong did his research in West Africa, where orality is life, where "palaver" unifies a community's resources and situates its people (Bujo, 1998, p. 54). Voices in palaver offer continuous, open interpretation of communal norms. The way of the palaver is roundabout, overlapping, redundant, inefficient, celebrative, and agonistic. Its participants must be embedded in communal history and committed to promoting life. Such is the culture of the speaking God.

African theological reflection fixes human worth not in the self, but in the relation between selves. Nigerian scholar Ogbannaua (1994) argues that divine essence, known through the voice of God, is communal. Thus the grant of the *imago Dei* is communal as well, akin to the biblical Trinity – persons fundamentally related and ontologically equal while distinct in identity and function.

A second point for scholars and practitioners: the persistently redemptive character of communication. This is a difficult conceptual sell after the Holocaust and smaller holocausts the world over. Many words, spoken and written, have caused rivers of blood and trash-heaps of civilizations. Nonetheless, a Christian theory of communication insists on resilient hope. Lutheran theologian Jürgen Moltmann begins with Kant's pervasive human question: "What can I hope for?" (Moltmann, 2012, p. 3). Developing a two-tiered response, Moltmann allows that answers to such an enduring quest are not found "in the worldly realm … by law, reason and the sword [but in] the spiritual realm … only by God's Word and Spirit, grace and faith" (p. 10). It is the Trinity again, spoken at the first, attested in the ruminations of listeners near and far, that finally points the way to Kant's answer, which has ongoing and never ending interpretive significance:

> The triune God … is not a solitary, apathetic ruler in heaven who subjugates everything; he is a God rich in relationships and able to enter into relationships, a fellowship God … If this is true then human beings can correspond to this triune God not through domination and subjugation but only through fellowship and life-furthering reciprocity. (Moltmann, 2012, p. 68)

Communication is possible, important, and, to every degree in Ong's sensorium, lively. Carey's public sphere is agonistically inclined toward hope. Media institutions and new social media are both technical marvels and partisan advocates accountable to moral authority (Fortner, 2007, p. 95). Prying, nudging, self-expression, commentary, news coverage, and entertainment are not autonomous,

not even jocular in the common secular sense, but real-time expressions of hope overcoming fear, community overcoming exclusivity – if they are good at all. History is not flat, not doomed to endless repetition, not without point and purpose. Communicative freedom is none of those things either, but opportunity, challenge, and hope.

Where does this "Christian theory" lead the field of communications in general and of communication theory in particular? The intent of this chapter has not been to isolate biblical fragments in support of a theory, picking here and there to construct a Babel-like über-theory. Rather the chapter aims at developing the story of the symbol-making action initiated by the divine voice, granted to all peoples, magnified and intensified in the promised messiah – and, as a story, open-ended as to historical process, since symbol and interpretation of symbol play out in the human enterprise, being now fecund and flourishing, now tragic and death-dealing. There is considerable play in the project begun in Genesis – multilayered options, balanced opportunities, prophetic calls, blind ignorance, failures of wisdom, and moments of courage and truthfulness. The study of communications is the examination of such symbolic interactions, purposed to relieve human losses and to build broad-based human gains. We misconceive a Christian theory if we fail to note both the initiative of the divine voice and the responsibility of humankind as a creative and interpretive agent. Focusing on causal sequences or capitulating to propaganda (marketing, persuasion, conversion) as the only reason to communicate vitiates the discipline.

The first mandate given to humankind was "Subdue the earth!" (Genesis 1: 26–28), rightly interpreted not as technological mastery but as cultural understanding that shapes human institutions toward the Creator's will and glory (Christians, 1977, p. 18). That is the end of the story as well (Revelation 19–21), however distant and ambiguous – which is to say open-ended as to means, clearer as to persons and purposes. A Christian paradigm insists that the great and long time in between Genesis and Revelation has been graced by communicative action that is astonishing in its claims and energizing as to the reasons why we, image bearers, make symbols and build cultures. Specialized theories will explain how this is done. Studies will dissect sequences. At the end – even the personal end that all sentient life experiences – the dialogue raises a celebrative "Amen" (Moltmann, 2012, p. 229), at which a new paradigm opens (Revelation 7: 12).

Acknowledgments

This chapter honors Dr. Robert E. Webber, whose 1980 book, *God Still Speaks*, was published from lectures given in his course "Theology of Communication" at Wheaton (IL) College Graduate School. Webber inspired many to examine the historical development of Christian doctrine and a smaller group to pursue the odd notion that God speaks and we humans are obliged to listen. Webber's students in

that smaller group will remember that he himself spoke with great passion and vigor, and once or twice danced on tables to make a point. It was our delight to listen and learn.

Notes

1 All citations from the Old and the New Testament are from the New Revised Standard Version of 1989.

2 *Pistis* (ancient Greek "faith") denotes the life oriented toward actively listening to the God who speaks, trusting God's benevolence, and desiring to enact God's purposes as they let themselves discerned through listening. *Pistis* then becomes a proto-norm, a control belief of the first magnitude (see n. 3).

3 Interpreting the significance of the Genesis account of creation is itself a complex story, far beyond the present scope. It's enough that thoughtful interpretations are available from evolutionary biologists, who manifest *pistis* in their scholarship and thus would find the claims made is this chapter close to their own "control" beliefs (Wolterstorff, 1984, p. 11); these interpretations, in the author's opinion, are the most interesting ones.

4 Ben Campbell Johnson charmingly expands the story of Abraham, offering several vignettes on how and why Abraham picked up this divine word. He concludes that Abraham's reception "points to the most vital element in monotheistic religion [namely that] God speaks to men and women, and they recognize God's voice and respond to it" (Johnson, 2004, pp. 3–5).

5 Friedrich Schleiermacher's *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (originally pulished in 1799) is considered the start of the movement to subordinate theological reflection to Enlightenment rationalism. The work is available at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org

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Theorizing about the Press in Post-Soviet Societies

Igor E. Klyukanov and Galina V. Sinekopova

"Post-Soviet" Operationalized

Following the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, "the 'reality' of the bipolar world changed dramatically" (Szpunar, 2011, p. 10); a number of societies making up this new reality came to be labeled "post-Soviet." Broadly understood, "post-Soviet" can be related to any society somehow connected to what used to be the USSR, for example by geographic, economic, political, or language ties. In this light, certainly Eastern European countries, but also Cuba (Loss & Prieto, 2012), or in fact the entire world (Bell, 1992), can be considered "post-Soviet." It is more appropriate, however, to qualify as "post-Soviet" the societies that once were part of the Soviet Union (see Goshulak, 2003), identifying them as a "new historical, social, and international community of people" ("Soviet people" – *sovetskii narod*). It is precisely in this sense that the concept is theorized, for instance, in the journal *Post-Soviet Affairs*, which features research on the republics of the former Soviet Union.

Scholars started reflecting on the post-Soviet reality immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Motyl, 1992). Over more than two decades since then, numerous studies of the post-Soviet reality have appeared, including ordinary life experiences (Richards, 2010), their moral nature (Zigon, 2010), the comparison between Soviet and post-Soviet identities (Bassin, Högskola, & Kelly, 2012), political aspects of the post-Soviet order (Nikolayenko, 2011; Rubin, 1998), its religious diversity (Alisauskiene & Schroder, 2012; Rasanayagam, 2011; Richters, 2012), its socioeconomics (Collier, 2011; Hass, 2012), its ethnic and national dynamics (Zurcher, 2007), and its language landscape (Bennet, 2011; Pavlenko, 2008).

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The post-Soviet media have received special attention from scholars (Beumers, Hutchings, & Rulyova, 2009; Koltsova, 2009; McNair, 2006/1991; Richter, 2007; Zassoursky, 2003). Such attention is not surprising in the light of increasing attempts at "de-Westernizing communication research" in general (Wang, 2011) and, in particular, at "de-Westernizing media studies" (Curran & Park, 2000) or "internationalizing media studies" (Thussu, 2009) – attempts that aim to overcome a "limited engagement with other cultures and knowledge systems" (Thussu, 2009, p. 16). The important task of theorizing post-Soviet press, as a part of that research agenda, cannot be questioned (Becker, 2004; Beumers, Hutchings, & Rulyova, 2009; Rosenholm, Nordenstreng, & Trubina, 2010; von Seth, 2008).

Soviet Press and Post-Soviet Press

It is only natural to theorize post-Soviet press against the background of a Soviet media framework (see, for example, McNair, 2006/1991). As noted by Sarah Oates, "the Soviet system has collapsed, but the Soviet model is still useful in understanding the poor performance of the media as a pillar of civil society in many post-Soviet states" (Oates, 2008, p. 5). The essentials of Soviet media theory, as described by Elena Vartanova (2009, p. 216), include proletarian partisanship, press subordination to the tasks defined by the ruling (communist) party, and the newspaper performing the functions of "propagandist," "agitator," and "organizer." It is worth pointing out that even the Soviet press system was not a monolithic entity, as it exhibited different characteristics under Lenin, Stalin, and Khruschev (see Hopkins, 1965). However, in practice the Soviet press was clearly based on the essential theoretical postulates described above. It is in this light that the Soviet Marxist theory of the press was presented in Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's (1963/1956) famous book, where Soviet press theory was treated in opposition to the USA's libertarian press theory (see the title of Schramm's chapter "The Soviet Concept and Our Own").

Against this background – and especially against Seibert and colleagues' book – a number of changes in post-Soviet press can be identified. Whereas Schramm noted "a great deal of sameness about the content of Soviet media on any day" (Siebert et al., 1963/1956, p. 122), today's press provides coverage of all kinds of content, from news to business to communication to entertainment. Also, Schramm was right in saying that "the profit motive [of the Soviet press] has been removed" (p. 5); today, however, the post-Soviet press clearly operates to a large extent on a market model: "post-Soviet journalism exists in conditions different to [*sic*] those of Soviet journalism: it earns its living in a growing competitive market, and therefore is increasingly directed toward the interests and preferences of consumers and advertisers" (Pasti, 2005, p. 99). Furthermore, post-Soviet press is no longer controlled by the ruling (communist) party and thus it no longer functions as its propaganda machine, although "the idea that journalism should function as an extension of the government is still alive" (p. 93).

Thus the development of post-Soviet press can no longer fit easily into the theoretical constraints laid out in Seibert and colleagues' book. At the same time, the

picture of press in different post-Soviet countries cannot be painted in uniform, let alone rosy colors. It must be remembered, of course, that over the past decade press freedom has been declining globally, with setbacks registered in nearly every region of the world. The former Soviet republics, except for the Baltic nations (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), are assessed to be either "partly free" (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine) or "not free" (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) (Freedom House, 2011b). One can think of such evidence supporting this assessment as, for instance, Ukraine's crackdown on media during recent elections, Azerbaijan's downward trend, caused by the unlawful detention of journalists, or Kazakhstan's legislation restrictions on the expression of religious freedom. Thus, in different post-Soviet countries, press has taken different routes of development. This becomes even more obvious when one looks at the relationship between democracy and press pluralism, defined as the extent to which diverse and competing views appear in the content of the mainstream press on a given news topic. The main indicator of democracy in this respect often consists in the data that come from the Freedom House organization. The Press Freedom Index, for example, is based on such criteria as openness, pluralism, political rights, civil liberties, censorship, government manipulation, violence, and surveillance. According to the most recent data from Freedom House (2011a), the post-Soviet republics range from 3 (Estonia) and 30 (Lithuania) to 157 (Uzbekistan), 168 (Belarus), and 177 (Turkmenistan) in the Press Freedom Index. Russia is still viewed as a model and patron for a number of neighboring countries – a situation that indirectly implies that its bad influence is partially to blame for the low rankings of several post-Soviet republics. Russia's low position is due to such factors as regulators' frequent targeting of independent outlets, journalists' increased self-censorship, and even the murdering of journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, since 1992 53 journalists have been killed in Russia in retaliation for their work. Censorship in contemporary Russian journalism is said to have intensified within the context of the war against terrorism (Simons & Strovsky, 2006). The struggle for press freedom in Russia continues, and no one understands how important and difficult that struggle is more than the journalists themselves (Azhgikhina, 2007).

Thus the picture of post-Soviet press is quite complex, and even paradoxical. On the one hand, the situation with press freedom in post-Soviet societies is quite discouraging, as it is characterized by the negative tendencies just described; on the other hand, over the last decades, post-Soviet press has made significant strides, especially when viewed against the background of Soviet practices – as demonstrated earlier. The complexity of this situation is reflected in the overall evaluation of the post-Soviet period, when "the media can hardly be said to have taken an independent position toward major political actors" (von Seth, 2011, p. 16). At the same time, favorable developments are noted; for instance, "today's readership can actively take a political stand using the information available in the press … and an important cultural foundation for democratic citizen participation seems to have been laid in the post-Soviet Russian public sphere" (von Seth, 2011, pp. 27–28). It is clear that theorizing about the press in post-Soviet societies is not an easy task.

It was much easier to conceptualize Soviet press and Western press during the Cold War years; Siebert and colleagues' *Four Theories* is a good example – and the most well-known conceptualization of this kind. However, in spite of their simplistic Cold War dualism between a Western press and a Soviet press, the ideas in this book proved quite influential for the development of press theory in many post-Soviet countries. The book was translated into Russian in 1998 and, according to Vartanova, "became the founding text for media/journalism theory" (Vartanova, 2009, p. 218). Vartanova, who is one of the leading researchers of post-Soviet transformation of Russian media, notes that

> the book became very popular because it addressed the most up-do-date issues in Russian political life, i.e. the freedom of speech concept, based on ideals of the "free" market, was the complete opposite of Soviet theory that viewed the media as purely instruments of politics and ideology. After the abolishment of censorship by the Law on mass Media (1991), there emerged a clear need to replace outdated practices of surveillance and control with more liberal concepts of the freedom of the press. (Vartanova, 2009, p. 219)

Thus the work of Siebert and colleagues can be seen as a theoretical catalyst to many changes in the post-Soviet practice of journalism.

Of course, the applicability of Western media models in post-Soviet countries – and on the Russian media system in particular – has been questioned (see de Smaele, 1999). We are reminded that in post-Soviet societies, when it comes to theorizing about the press, "authors do not accept Western concepts uncritically" (Vartanova, 2009, p. 225). Siebert and colleagues' book, too, has received its fair share of criticism. It has been criticized, for instance, for its lack of historicity and for its empiricism (Nerone, 1995). Also, its authors developed their ideas against the background of the Cold War; hence the dichotomy between an American (libertarian) theory of the press and a Soviet (Marxist) one. Spain was at the time a representative country for the third, authoritarian, theory, while the fourth view of the press – social responsibility – proved more difficult to theorize and match up with a country; the USA was said to be developing in that direction. Thus all four conceptualizations appeared to be discrete and mutually exclusive entities. As Merrill wryly observed: "Evidently the Marxist press was irresponsible to its society. Ditto for the authoritarian press systems" (Merrill, 2002, p. 133).

It is known very well, for instance, that, since the publication of Siebert and his colleagues' book, many attempts have been made to challenge, change, or add to its ideas. Such attempts include works "that have sought to 'go beyond' … 'revisit' … reformulate *Four Theories* … and even perform its 'last rights' … " (Szpunar, 2011, p. 5).

Merrill and Lowenstein (1971), for example, revised the original *Four Theories* by adding a fifth theory – social centrist. The social responsibility theory was renamed social libertarian, while the Soviet communist theory became social centralist, later renamed social authoritarian; this was done to overcome the negative

connotations of the communist label. The social responsibility theory was relabeled social libertarian, and the concept of social centrist, in which a government or the public owned press sources to ensure the operational spirit of libertarian philosophy, was used to describe the new fifth category. Merrill later elaborated Lowenstein's ideas and formulated continuum theory (Merrill, 1991/1974), according to which a press system could move either toward authoritarianism or toward libertarianism, regardless of political system. He took a radical libertarian position when he defined freedom as freedom "from outside control" (p. 26). Even the professionalization of press, in his opinion, must be viewed as a mechanism of outside control, with no place for social responsibility theory. Following the analysis of press by Siebert and colleagues, these conceptualizations continue the tradition of juxtaposing the West and the "other"; for instance, in a volume edited by Merrill (1991/1974), Eastern European countries, including the Soviet Union, are described as "least Western" or as countries that "look Western."

The tradition of "othering" can be found in other attempts of revising *Four Theories*. For example, Hachten presents five press theories/ideologies: authoritarian, Western (combining libertarian and social responsibility theory), communist, revolutionary, and developmental (see Hachten & Scotton, 2007). Ironically, in spite of the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, this framework is still grounded in the same binominal opposition between the West and Soviet communist ideologies. In Pickard's work, one finds a sixth theory, democratic socialist, which "is built upon the view that society leans heavily on media in its efforts to meet social needs" (Pickard, 1985, p. 68) and that the state should have a role in this. Although Pickard tries to go past the Cold War binaries that he criticizes in *Four Theories*, his ideas still reflect Western idealism and "championship of a Western perspective of democracy" (Ostini & Fung, 2002, p. 44).

Altschull (1995/1984), in his attempt to move away from *Four Theories*, creates a typology of three models: market, communitarian, and advancing. All three systems of press seek to serve people, though in different ways. The market system supports capitalism, the communitarian system supports correct doctrines, and the advancing system promotes beneficial change and peace. For Siebert and his colleagues, the Soviet journalist had a political task of using the press to promote Soviet ideology, while journalists within a libertarian system were supposed to be above politics and to present information devoid of any propaganda; for Altschull, however, no press system can be apolitical. The role of the media is to preserve the existing political system – capitalism under the market model, and socialism under the communitarian model.

Hallin and Mancini's (2004) *Comparing Media Systems*, in which they identify three models – polarized pluralist, democratic corporatist, and liberal – can be seen as a another attempt of showing that the reality of media systems is very complex and cannot be simply "lumped under 'the western,' 'libertarian' or 'liberal' headings" (Szpunar, 2011, p. 14). Overall, however, the "other," constructed in Siebert and colleagues' work, clearly persists in theorizing post-Soviet press, and the binominal oppositions remain.

Post-Soviet Press Theories as Structures of Significations

Although numerous attempts have been made to criticize the work of Siebert and colleagues, all such attempts have turned out to be variations of their ideas, and four is still the magic number. While explaining the book's appeal, Merrill notes that four is "a good number, easy to remember and implying more sophistication than simply three or two (Merrill, 2002, p. 133). As a matter of fact, this sophistication is deeply rooted: associated with equality, reliability, fairness, firmness, and solidity, the fourfold approach to symbolic phenomena has a long-standing tradition, from Aristotle's square of oppositions to the semiotic square of Algirdas Greimas and Joseph Courtés (1982). Indeed, it is within the framework of the semiotic square that the appeal of *Four Theories*, and of most existing research that follows it, can be explained and conceptualized.

The semiotic square provides the articulation of a single semantic category through the relationships of contrariety, contradiction, and implication. Applied to press theory, "freedom" is the concept that is discussed most often, so it is only natural to take freedom as such a semantic category and see how it can be articulated within the semiotic square (see Klyukanov & Sinekopova, 2002; Yin, 2008). It is important to emphasize that the semiotic square visually represents the *relations* between structures of signification, and four press conceptualizations can be taken as such structures of signification. This way, it becomes possible "to avoid the fallacy that the groupings [*sc*. the four theories] are mutually exclusive" (Ostini & Fung, 2002, p. 44).

Let us first look at press the way it was done by Siebert and colleagues, which is still the most common way of theorizing the press, namely as a dependent variable in relation to the system of social control. In this respect, the role of press best lends itself to the modality of being-able-to-do (Greimas & Courtés, 1982, p. 185) and takes the form of four positions: being-able-to-do/freedom; being-able-not-to-do/independence; not-being-able-not-to-do/obedience; not-being-able-to-do/powerlessness. It is easy to see how parallels can be drawn between these four positions and Siebert and colleagues' four theories of press (Figure 48.1).

It is well known that Siebert and colleagues "begin by positioning a centralized, authoritarian society on one side (the 'authoritarian' model), and a free libertarian one on the other side (the 'libertarian' model)" (Woods, 2007, p. 213). At the same time, one can see discrepancies between their implicit argument and their explicit claims. While they position the authoritarian theory against the libertarian theory, they still state that it is the Soviet press and the American press that "line up almost diametrically opposite in their tenets" (Siebert et al., 1963/1956, p. 105). Two diametrically opposite terms that cannot be present together form the relation of contradiction. From the dynamic point of view, the relation of contradiction can be seen as the operation of negation, that is, two terms are said to be contradictory if the negation of one implies the affirmation of the other, and vice

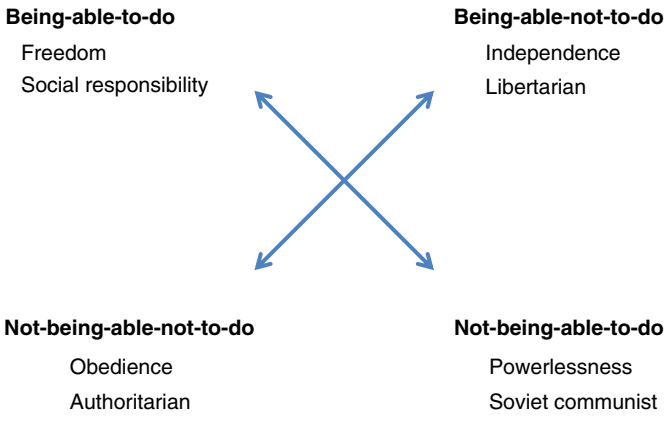

Figure 48.1 Four models of the press: Modality of *being-able-to-do*.

versa. In this sense, it is more accurate to see the relation of contradiction formed by the opposition of the authoritarian theory and the libertarian theory. In the context of media (see Ostini & Fung, 2002), authoritarianism is viewed as a system that enforces strict obedience by media to political authorities. Also, authoritarianism is operationalized as control of content by the state and a general lack of freedom for the public to criticize state policies.

While Siebert and colleagues present the authoritarian and the libertarian theories of press as contradictory, they also see these two conceptualizations in the following light: "we say that their press is not free; they say that our press is not responsible" (Siebert et al., 1963/1956, p. 6). It is easy to notice that the contradictory relation is not between the authoritarian theory and the libertarian theory, but between the social responsibility theory and the Soviet communist theory. The Soviet communist theory is, indeed, the offshoot of the authoritarian theory or, in the words of Siebert and colleagues, "a new and dramatic development of authoritarianism" (p. 5). Viewing the opposition between the authoritarian theory and the libertarian theory in terms of lack of freedom – that is, powerlessness (Soviet communist) and freedom (social responsibility) – is another instance of discrepancy between Siebert and colleagues' implicit argument and their explicit claims.

The Soviet communist theory and the authoritarian theory form the relation of contrariety, that is, one of reciprocal presupposition; the same relation of contrariety is found between the social responsibility and the libertarian theories. While comparing the Soviet communist theory and the authoritarian theory, Siebert and colleagues write:

> Grounded in Marxist determinism … the Soviet press operates as a tool of the ruling power just as clearly as did the older authoritarianism. Unlike the older pattern, it is state rather than privately owned. The profit motive has been removed, and a concept of positive has been substituted for a concept of negative liberty. (Siebert et al., 1963/1956, p. 5)

This claim can be seen as another potential source of confusion because it might be interpreted to suggest that profit is a case of the so-called "positive freedom," while the Soviet press can be equated with the so-called "negative freedom" (Berlin, 1958). In reality, however, it is the libertarian theory of press that is based on the concept of negative freedom (liberty or independence), whereas positive freedom lies at the foundation of the social responsibility theory. For example, when discussing the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations on September 18, 2000, Kaarle Nordenstreng notes "a largely overlooked sentence under 'Human rights, democracy and good governance'" (2010), which emphasizes "the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information" (UN, 2000, Article V). Nordenstreng writes: "It is a concept of positive freedom to perform a certain role that is captured by this clause – not a negative freedom from restraint to do whatever the media may want to do" (2010, p. 22).

As mentioned earlier, in this view, a press system is conceptualized as the subject, while the system of social control is taken to be the agent in the process of communication. Consistent with this view, and following the work of Siebert and colleagues, most theorizing about the press "focuses exclusively on structural factors and ignores the individual journalist's autonomy, professionalism, and enduring values" (Ostini & Fung, 2002, p. 45). Meanwhile, press can, and must, be seen as an active and dynamic phenomenon in its own right, because "media operations, journalistic reporting, and editorial decisions are not totally determined by the economic base" (p. 45) – or, one might add, by the political system of social control. It must be remembered that press can be seen as "a relatively autonomous cultural production of journalists negotiating between their professionalism and state control" (Ostini & Ostini, 2002, p. 45) and that the incorporation of the autonomy of individual journalistic practices into political and social structural factors must be taken into consideration.

It is necessary, therefore, to focus on how a press system can have an impact of its own on a social system, in other words on the society at large. According to Greimas and Courtés (1982, p. 184), such an impact can be conceptualized in the modality of causing-to-do and takes the form of the following four positions: causing-to-do/intervention; causing-not-to-do/hindrance; not-causing-not-to-do/leaving be; not-causing-to-do/non-intervention. In this view, a press system is conceptualized as the agent of communication, while the society at large is taken to be its subject. In a similar vein, Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, and White (2009) discuss the role of media on the basis of their relation to the dominant political–economic powers, on the one hand, and with the citizens of the civil society, on the other. Four such roles are identified: (1) "monitoring" for reporting the power; (2) "facilitative" for serving civil society; (3) "radical" for questioning the political system; and (4) "collaborative" for serving the state and other power institutions. Using the modality of causing-to-do, these four roles can be mapped out on the semiotic square as shown in Figure 48.2.

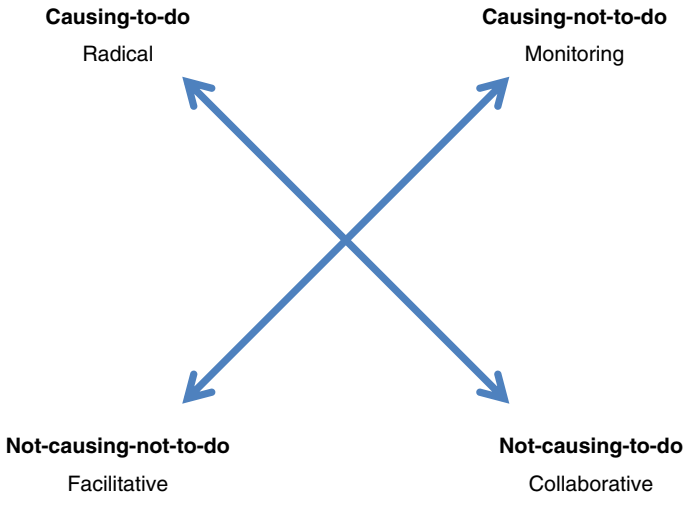

Figure 48.2 Four roles of the press: modality of *causing-to-do*.

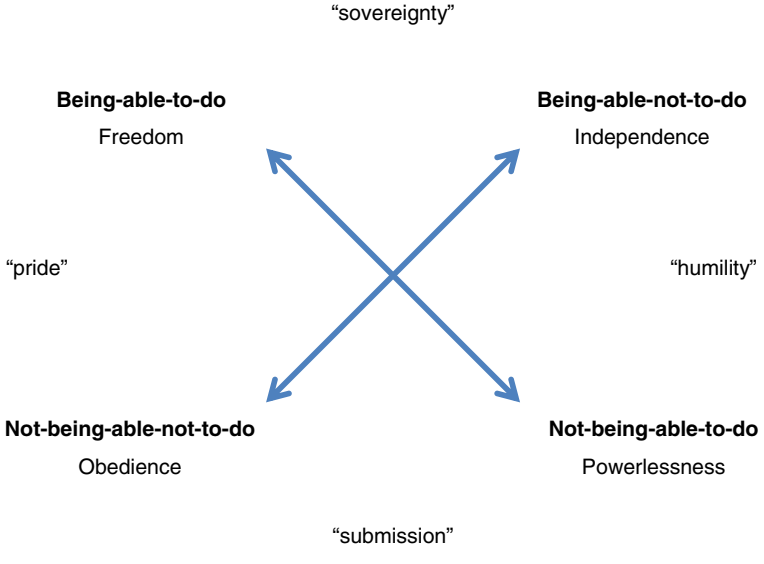

Figure 48.3 Four cultural codes of the press.

Finally, the action of press puts into play four codes within the society as a "socio-cultural universe" (Greimas & Courtés, 1982, p. 185): "sovereignty" (freedom + independence), "submission" (obedience + powerlessness), "pride" (freedom + obedience), and "humility" (independence + powerlessness) (Figure 48.3).

In the post-Soviet press, all four codes are activated. The code of pride, for example, is related to patriotism as a value ascribed to a press system. For instance, while discussing the present-day press system in Russia, Sergei Korkonosenko notes

"the paradigm of the value of patriotism in national journalism as a special subject of media analysis" (Korkonosenko, 2011, p. 161). Also, while discussing the historic development and current situation of mass media in Kyrgyzstan, Ibraeva and Kulikova (2002) discuss sovereignty as the relations of partnership and constructive opposition between the press and the power elite – relations based on the principles of democracy.

Beyond the Normative Framework

As discussed above, theorizing about the press in post-Soviet societies is still predominantly carried out by using the influential ideas of Siebert and colleagues. Also, it was shown how such various conceptualizations of the press can be brought together within one theoretical framework of the semiotic square. This way it becomes possible to identify a number of "blind spots" in these authors' original work, which are manifest in the discrepancies between their implicit argument and explicit claims, while presenting a more coherent view of different theories of press as structures of signification.

Other approaches to the complex dynamics of post-Soviet press have been proposed as well, which seem to radically break with the ideas of Siebert and colleagues. One of the most developed and influential approaches is found in theorizing about the post-Soviet press as part of the transitional media. A rhetoric of transition posits post-Soviet societies "to catch up [with] or join in" (Szpunar, 2011, p. 15) other, more developed nations.

While it seems to be natural, and it is certainly tempting, to view press in post-Soviet societies within the transitional media framework, critics have pointed to a number of weaknesses of this way of theorizing. First of all, and most importantly, "the transitological approach to the study of post-communism is infused with a teleological perspective based on the assumption of a single endpoint to historical progression, namely, liberal democracy" (Gans-Morse, 2004, p. 321). From this perspective, the development of press in every post-Soviet society is predetermined, and it is only a matter of time before the press transitions to the state of liberal democracy. Also, some critics have questioned the liberal foundations of the press as the endpoint of its development. For instance, in the place of a liberalism-based theory, some scholars have called "for a theory grounded in communitarian thought, with the mission of the press becoming civic transformation rather than provision of information" (Craig, 1996, p. 112). Additionally, "some skeptics of transitology argue that it provides no framework for analyzing the new breeds of authoritarianism emerging in the post-communism region" (Gans-Morse, 2004, p. 328), and the results of the data provided by the Freedom House, mentioned earlier, seem to support this argument. Not surprisingly, while the rhetoric of transition is still present in the study of post-Soviet media in general and in the study of the press in particular, and while attempts are made to reconceptualize the transitological approach (Jankauskas & Gudžinskas, 2008),

most scholars "find the transitological approach inapplicable or insufficient for analyzing the key questions of post-communism" (Gans-Morse, 2004, p. 328). In this light, conventional models of "transitions to democracy" are deemed incomplete and insufficient for the analysis of post-Soviet societies (Gel'man, 2003). As a result, the question remains "of how to develop a theory of post-communist transitions that moves beyond transitology" (Gans-Morse, 2004, p. 343).

The transitological approach appears to present a way of theorizing the press in post-Soviet societies that offers an alternative to the framework based on the approach developed by Siebert and his colleagues and all the other research influenced by their ideas. However, the two conceptualizations are more alike than different; for instance, the transitological framework, too, can be taken back to Siebert and colleagues' work, as it reveals an evolutionary model "in which press systems would move from communist to authoritarian to liberalism and on to social responsibility" (Ostini & Fung, 2002, p. 44). More importantly, both approaches to press theorizing are grounded in the same modern(ization) paradigm.

In this respect, it is common to read about the normative nature of press theorizing, including theorizing about the press in post-Soviet societies, for which Siebert and colleagues' book set the tone: see its subtitle, "The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet communist concepts of what the press *should* be and do" (emphasis added). In such thinking, the libertarian theory is presented as the (ideal) norm against which all other conceptualizations of the press should be evaluated. One can notice in such thinking not only a Western bias (McQuail, 2000), but also a limitation in the overall approach to press theorizing: if only the libertarian theory of the press can be considered normative, then all others (including those in *Four Theories*) must be denied that status. However, all press theories, including – and especially – those in *Four Theories*, are commonly presented as normative:

> Scholars attempting to classify normative theories … as well as less systematic reflections about media and democracy, have identified non-democratic theories, including authoritarian, totalitarian, Marxist–Leninist, and developmental, as well as democratic theories, including libertarian, social responsibility, democratic elite, democratic participatory, public sphere, and postmodern. (Benson, 2008, p. 2591)

Meanwhile, on the very first page of *Four Theories* it is stated: "In simplest terms the question behind this book is why is the press *as it is*? (Siebert et al., 1963/1956, p. 1; emphasis added). As mentioned earlier, in that book, press is taken to be a dependent variable in relation to the (state and/or ideological) system of social control, providing "an easily discussed typology of press–government relationships" (Merrill, 2002, p. 133). This relationship can be even viewed as deterministic; for example, Siebert and colleagues' theorizing can be seen to be "ironically similar to a traditional Marxist base and superstructure theory" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 8). Thus a contradiction can be identified in their thinking as well as in most press theorizing in post-Soviet societies that is based on their ideas. On the one hand, such theorizing claims to be normative, aimed at conceptualizing the nature of the press the way it *should*

be; on the other hand, such theorizing wants to answer the question why the press is the way it *is*. This contradiction, however, is not surprising, because

> there is an apparent paradox in the normative media concept. Although theoretically it is widely believed that normative media theories are not designed to examine any empirical media systems but media systems in a general or abstract sense … practically … many researchers cannot help but do the opposite, risking putting dynamic and complex media realities into various normative pigeonholes. (Huang, 2003, p. 454)

That is why, perhaps, some recent work has attempted to explicitly move from the normative framework, based on the classic construction of the "other" that goes back to *Four Theories*; Hallin and Mancini's (2004) book is considered to be one such example (Szpunar, 2011, p. 14). However, it is very important to understand that this move cannot be productive by avoiding the discussion of systems that were at some point classified as the "other," or by abandoning the concept of normativity altogether. Instead, "what is needed is an explicit turn to the meta-narratives and meta-devices used in constructing boundaries, others and ideals" (Szpunar, 2011, p. 14).

Post-Soviet Press Theorizing as Reflexive Praxis

To take theorizing about the press in post-Soviet societies down that path, we must go beyond the modern(ization) paradigm, whether represented by Siebert and colleagues' or by transitological conceptualizations, and view press as a dynamic phenomenon that is undergoing transformation rather than transition. Only this way can we look at the press in a new light, which would make it possible,

> by rejecting any conception of a presumed endpoint to transition … to focus on present events and to evaluate empirical evidence without the bias that potentially results from the belief that a country is on a transition track to a given outcome. (Gans-Morse, 2004, p. 335)

In this light, the very term "post-Soviet" appears problematic, because it is bound to the concept "Soviet" that it aims to overcome. One can clearly see, however, that the latter appears as a positive term, which determines the former. Besides, a question arises: What comes after "post-Soviet?" – more "posts"? (Buckler, 2009). The idea of new possibilities is better expressed by "proto-," which posits a phenomenon not so much after as in the very beginning of a new development whose characteristics can, and must, be positively defined. In other words, press in post-Soviet societies must be seen in terms of opening up new terrains of development (see Pietiläinen, 2002, pp. 44–47). This approach to theorizing the press posits that post-Soviet experiences "are at a nascent stage and that the current patterns are not to be read as an 'end of history' of sorts" (Szpunar, 2011, p. 15).

In this sense, post-Soviet societies can be seen as inherently postmodern, in the sense of being open to new possibilities and beginnings (see Epstein,

Genis, & Vladiv-Glover, 1999). This mode of theorizing about the post-Soviet press can be considered postmodern, especially in the light of new digital technologies and electronic media. For instance, it is argued (Khvan, 2005) that the post-Soviet press, and particularly Internet newspapers, can be viewed as a phenomenon of Russian postmodernism, combining traces of socialist realism and innovative avant-garde features.

A shift in viewing the post-Soviet press in terms of "proto-" is based on a different conceptual mode of theorizing. Using the framework developed by Anderson and Baym (2004) for the philosophical analysis of communication, it is possible to identify this new mode of theorizing as "reflexive/empirical" rather than "foundational/analytical," given its claims to a normative nature. The latter is

> aiming at prophetic veridicality about the universals of human life. Its arguments are global and highly rational intending utopian, redemptive solutions – "Workers arise!" [in our case – "Let all press transition to liberal democracy!"]. (Anderson & Baym, 2004, p. 593)

Consistently with the "reflexive/empirical" mode of theorizing, however, press is viewed as a "bottom up enterprise," which must be conceptualized by

> advancing claims from a cultural and sociological (not idiosyncratic) subjectivity. Those claims are local (though the locale may be large) and in narrative, enthymematic form and directed toward insight and understanding of action that socially constructs the reality in which we live. (Anderson & Baym, 2004, p. 593)

The reflexive mode of theorizing underscores its ethical underpinnings. As mentioned earlier, a turn to the meta-devices used in constructing boundaries and ideals must be *explicitly* stated. The purpose of such self-reflexive approach

> is not to wash our hands of the entailments of normativity; rather, it allows us to adjudicate – even if in a limited manner – the repercussions of our normative positions and how they may affect our study of media systems. This also requires scholars to justify these positions, rather than simply assume them and their value. (Szpunar, 2011, p. 17)

One must be reminded of James Carey's view of communication models, which he conceptualized not merely as representations *of* communication, but also as representations *for* communication, that is, as templates that guide concrete processes of human interaction – and not only interpersonal interaction, but mass communication as well. If we fail to remember that, we fail to understand how communication models "create what we disingenuously pretend they merely describe" (Carey, 1989, p. 32).

With a shift in focus on post-Soviet press as a new ("proto-") phenomenon at the very beginning of new developments, every effort must be made not so much to analytically construct another (pseudo-)normative foundational framework as to try and identify various forms of press praxis. In other words, it is necessary "to get down to the nitty-gritty of professional journalistic practice" (Pasti, 2005, p. 94).

Only this way does it become possible to identify different practices in post-Soviet journalism such as hidden advertisements, paying a source for information, making facts or stories up, and so on (p. 97). Also, journalists' perceptions of their role must be studied; an example of this kind of study is the analysis of the media in Tatarstan, which, by using documentary and statistical sources, includes such issues as the distinction between "information" and "presentation," the search for a new ethos among the younger generation of journalists, and orientations toward the audience (Davis, Hammond, & Nizamova, 1998).

Special attention must be paid to specific uses of language, as well as to discourse dynamics in post-Soviet press. For instance, von Seth uses Habermas' theory of the public sphere and communicative action and discourse analysis, focusing on how "specific uses of language offer certain interpretational patterns for the understanding of reality" (von Seth, 2011, p. 17). Also, by focusing on semantic roles discriminating between principal causes of actions and processes (compare the concept of transitivity, common in critical discourse analysis), one significant change can be noted, namely, "the agentless actions disappear altogether from the post-Soviet texts [a number of newspapers forming the study sample]" (p. 23). In other words, "in the post-Soviet texts, as a rule agency is clearly assigned to political actors and institutions" (p. 25).

Thus, focusing on press practices in post-Soviet societies calls for a wider use of language-oriented methods such as critical discourse analysis or ethnography of communication. A parallel can be drawn between (the goal of) theorizing about the press in post-Soviet societies, on the one hand, and, on the other, the enterprise of ethnography of communication aimed at working toward the identification of universal meaningful categories of speaking through their cross-cultural comparison – which was the goal set by Hymes on the basis of Pike's emic–etic distinction (Keating, 2001, p. 288). Similarly, a balance must be struck between studying native journalism practices and the general theory of press, in order to avoid the reification of cultural differences by keeping the boundaries open. When conceptualizing the post-Soviet press, it is important to remember that "any empirical data must be accompanied by a meta-focus that is … at its core theoretical. This is something akin to the self-reflexivity found in anthropological or ethnographic work" (Szpunar, 2011, p. 17).

Overall, the heuristic value of theorizing about press in post-Soviet societies lies in the fact that it should contribute to the goal of conceptualizing the press as a global human phenomenon. Ontologically, "the global" cannot be identified with a simple process of transference of information. Rather, the concept of globalization must be seen

> as a mediating link between the modern world with its crusty social ontology and the brave new world that remains inaccessible and unintelligible not only to the subscribers to that ontology but also to the believers in global change as well. Not only is globalization a moving target for social inquiry, but it also signifies the movement of that inquiry itself. (Bartelson, 2000, p. 192)

This theoretical approach is consistent with the call to never separate the reality studied and described and the reality constructed in this process – which was so eloquently voiced by Carey, as quoted earlier.

Thus a balance must be struck between viewing the press as part of the modern(ization) paradigm ("the modern world") and as "the brave new world" of post-Soviet press that transcends this paradigm: whether we call it "postmodern" or discuss it in terms of "proto-," it always, in part, "remains inaccessible and unintelligible," and yet it must be studied and theorized. This task is made more difficult, yet more rewarding for all that. As Susan Buck-Morss writes in *Theorizing Today: The Post-Soviet Condition*, we must now move to

> trans-cultural research and theory that opens up new spaces for imagination and action. The theoretical task will be a collective effort. No one book, no one discipline or school, no one cultural renaissance or national academy will provide it single-handedly. (Buck-Morss, 2006, p. 8)

These words can be applied in full measure to theorizing about the press in post-Soviet societies.

To conclude, in this chapter we have tried to accomplish several goals. First of all, "post-Soviet" was operationalized as a concept referring to the societies that once were part of the Soviet Union. Key areas of scholarly reflection on the post-Soviet reality were outlined, especially by emphasizing the important task of theorizing about post-Soviet media and about the press as their key part. Second, it was shown how the post-Soviet press is theorized against the background of a Soviet media framework, and a number of changes in post-Soviet press were identified. Special attention was paid to how *Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert and colleagues set the tone for theorizing about the post-Soviet press – which, in spite of numerous attempts to overcome their ideas, still exhibits the spirit of "othering" that is reflected in binominal oppositions. Third, it was demonstrated how conceptualizations of the post-Soviet press can be presented as structures of signification within the framework of the semiotic square, which explains the appeal of Siebert and colleagues' work. The concept of freedom was selected as the semantic category articulated within the semiotic square. It was especially emphasized how press can be viewed not only as a dependent variable in relation to the system of social control, but also as the agent of communication processes endowed with the autonomy of individual journalistic practices, which have an impact on political and social structural factors. The discussion of press theories as structures of signification allowed us to reveal several "blind spots" in Siebert and colleagues' work, which must be taken into consideration while conceptualizing post-Soviet press. Fourth, it was argued that both the approach to press theories as structures of signification, which is based on that work, and the transitological framework, which seems to break away from this approach most radically, are grounded in the same paradigm, the normative nature of which was identified and criticized. The necessity of moving beyond such normative framework was highlighted. Fifth, it was

shown why and how the post-Soviet press must be theorized as reflexive praxis, aimed at studying emergent press practices. The ethical underpinnings of this reflexive mode of theorizing were underscored. Also, it was explained why special attention must be paid to specific uses of language, as well as to discourse dynamics in post-Soviet press. And, finally, the press in post-Soviet societies was presented as part of global communication processes. In view of this, theorizing about the post-Soviet press calls for a transcultural collective research effort.

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Internet and Political Activism in Post-Revolutionary Iran

Babak Rahimi

In this chapter I discuss various dimensions of Internet activism in post-revolutionary Iran. In particular, I look at how the Internet has changed the ways Iranians engage in performing dissident activities while encountering various censorship measures from the state. For a post-revolutionary society engaged with global industrial and technological transformations and undergoing major socioeconomic and cultural changes, especially among the youth population, the new information communication technologies (ICTs) have facilitated rapid developments in information sharing in tandem with significant advances in computing, mobile telephones, fax machines, and satellite television. While the precise impact of the emerging technology on politics – specifically, instances of dissent through the Internet, with offline implications – is too early to be conclusively determined, Iranian online protests, which are linked to a long tradition of street protests dating back to the Constitutional Revolution (1906–1911), resemble many cases of Internet-mediated political activisms around the world. Although varying greatly in objectives, tactics, organizational activism, expressions of dissent, and ideology, Internet activism has produced new forms of what Charles Tilly called "contentious performances" in collective participation, organization, and strategic communication practices (Tilly, 2004, p. 105).

As a source of mediated practices, Internet activism can be spontaneous and participatory, mobilized and yet uncoordinated. John Thompson has described the dynamic of this kind of mediated action in terms of how actors respond to diverse situations to mobilize concerted action and yet communicate in uncoordinated ways (Thompson, 1995, pp. 112–113). As numerous others studies have also shown, the Internet is increasingly becoming an integral part of activism in the form of new mobilizations, organizations, and expressions of protest, which also

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entail a new discursive and social imaginary and – to varying degrees – a demand for political and social change (Cottle & Lester, 2011; Dartnell, 2006; Earl & Kimport, 2012; Hands, 2011; Karpf, 2012; McCaughey & Ayers, 2003; Pal & Dutta, 2012; van de Don, Loader, Nixon, & Rucht, 2004; Yang, 2009). Internet activism heralds the birth of a new kind of actors, involved with new practices of activism. In his *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism* Paolo Gerbaudo (2012) describes how the 2011 Egyptian revolution was led by an emerging cosmopolitan youth known as the the "*shabab-al-Facebook*" ("Facebook youth"), who interacted and created a sense of unity for mobilization through social media. The same process of mobilization, effected by a new generation of activists – themselves inspired by new a sense of togetherness, constructed through the Internet – was also apparent in 2009 in Iran. However, what is unique about Iranian online activism is the way in which this kind of activism has been largely responding to and, accordingly, resisting state power in the political environment of Iran. It is precisely the local–national, though tied to transnational processes, that underlines the distinct character of Iranian online activism in light of political opportunities and challenges specific to Iran.

In theoretical terms, Internet-mediated political activism is identified here as a type of contentious performance that involves complex informal communicative practices, most of which identify unofficial forms of political actions that have grown in complexity and force, especially since the post-election crisis in 2009. By and large, Internet political activism in Iran has developed, I argue, in three distinct phases, which mark diverse yet interrelated unofficial communicative processes that are structurally tied to offline political changes. The first phase, under reformist politics (1997–2005), is described here as a period during which the Internet emerged as a luxury commodity with a degree of political implications that involved civic activism as the overriding feature of the emerging media. At this stage the Internet served as a counter-media space wherein a growing dissident community was able to challenge the state, mostly through an alternative form of information sharing practices and the dissemination of unofficial news. Along with print media, which under Khatami saw a short period of relative openness, the Internet served as an alternative media site, cheap and accessible in that newly emerging civic groups and political organizations could express dissent in ways that could not be managed through the official media.

The second period (2005–2009) began with the rise of a new hardliner movement seizing power with the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, which unleashed a new phase of enhanced censorship and, accordingly, introduced different ways of doing political activism online. The notion of *fragmentation* of Internet communication implies that individuated forms of media activities, as a reaction to an increased regime of censorship, produced new contentious spaces wherein state legitimacy could be questioned through various personal communicative strategies, like blog writing and publications of memoirs or banned books online. While individuation of online political activism continues to shape cybercommunication, the 2009 presidential elections and the ensuing unrest over alleged electoral fraud opened a

new phase of contentious political activism online. In post-election Iran, the Internet provided new collective claims on state power, and also served as a discursive and mobilization site for action. The notion of *social mobilization* of the Internet communication denotes a type of activism that is primarily about changing the larger political order through coordinated participation, rather than merely carving out individuated spaces of dissent amid a repressive political environment. Here I identify a number of features in the Iranian post-election online activism, all of which involve the application of various communicative strategies for collective action.

The key idea proposed here is an account of the Internet as the source of a new kind of media practices that are increasingly merging with dialogical and interactive processes through which both users and audiences become active creators or authors of contentious politics. Such a paradigm of action assumes that the Internet is more than a mere means of communication: it is a distinct set of performative actions, in that new realities are imagined and new politics are articulated in contentious ways. As the case of Iran shows, Internet activism is a type of activity that involves new experiences and interpretive schemas adapted to diverse narrative formats, which are the foundation of political formations at both societal and state levels.

The Internet as a Civic Medium

In their classic study of the 1979 Revolution, Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi have shown that the Iranian Revolution primarily emerged from mediated communicative processes that linked agency and structure in ways that led to one of the most popular revolutions in history (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). "Small media," in particular cassette tapes, played an integral role in the formation of a public sphere of opposition that facilitated the circulation of information, the construction of counter-narratives and public opinion, and the creation and mobilization of solidarity with the aim to topple the authoritarian regime of the Pahlavi monarchy. In the Iranian context, small media also served as an information and communicative resource for the revolutionary movement to challenge the "big media" of the regime, which operated as the ideological medium of manipulation of public opinion and construction of a post-traditionalist or "Westernized" Iranian identity under the Pahalvi rule.

But, as Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi have also argued, the late success of revolutionary communication in the 1970s, in the form of small media, would not have been possible without "traditional" media of communication and cultural flows rooted in Shi'i Islam and in the everyday networks of mosques and the bazaar. The newer media used in the revolution were too dependent on older media channels, rooted in network domains of interaction and cultural–cognitive process, which contributed to effective mobilization and to the revolutionary movement. At the same time, interaction between "traditional" and "modern" media was remarkably innovative, in ways that led to the emergence of new forms

of political activism and changed how activists would interact and generate political communication. For instance, Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini (1902–1995) and other revolutionary Shi'i clerics with a traditional educational background used modern technologies like the telephone and portable cassette recorders to disseminate sermons and radical discourses on politics and religion from outside of Iran, while rearticulating tradition in revolutionary conceptions of social justice and popular sovereignty. In other words, newer or smaller media did not emerge in a cultural vacuum but enhanced the dynamics of older media in order to facilitate revolutionary currents.

The emergence of Internet as a distinct medium in post-revolutionary Iran also testifies to the complex convergence of "old" and "new" media activities, or what political scientist Ithiel de Sola Pool called the "convergence of mode" – in which lines between various communication media gets blurred, so one-to-one relationships wane away as a result (de Sola Pool, 1983, p. 23). Originally launched by Mohammad Javad Larijani, director of the Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics (IPM), in 1993, the Internet was first promoted by the government as a way to provide an alternative means of scientific and technological development during the troubled economic period that followed the Iran–Iraq War (Rahimi, 2008, p. 38). The development of the Internet also reflected the deeply modernist claims of the Islamic Republic as a major Islamist state in charge of advancing a new, alternative modernity based on the Third World ideology of scientific innovation through self-reliance. The initial development of the Internet also coincided with another major current that considerably politicized the emerging media: the rise of the reformist movement.

By the mid-1990s, a loose coalition of dissident Shi'i clerics, seminary students, university students, intellectuals, and middle-class professionals began to mobilize support for reforms. The presidential elections of 1997, won by the reformist cleric Mohammad Khatami, strengthened the new coalition, which represented a growing middle class and a modernist political culture grounded in civil society and in the discourse of "rule of law" (Arjomand, 2000, pp. 283–301). With Iran's demographic structure rapidly changing, largely in response to urbanization, bureaucratization, and the diffusion of new technologies in everyday life, a new generation – mostly born after the revolution – embraced the new alliance. In response to years of economic growth and state building, the reformist phase unleashed a series of reflexive rational–critical and counter-cultural processes. The impact of the reformist movement can be described in many ways, but one prominent feature is the escalation of political rivalry between reformists, who sought to limit the absolute authority of the supreme leader, and the conservative factions, which aimed to maintain political hegemony through political repression and domination of the public sphere.

The year 1998 marked an intense period of factional rivalry in the post-Khomeini era. This factionalism, which intensified especially during local and parliamentary elections, bolstered reformists and made them more active toward obtaining greater influence within state institutions and becoming more visible in the public

sphere – where an increase in freedom of expression in print media challenged the conservative establishment. Emboldened by Khatami's presidency, reformists fought for control over many public institutions; the legislative branch of government was their prime target. The reformists' relative control over the parliament promoted a relaxation of the restrictions over media, in particular print culture, which saw a proliferation of new publications, many of which reflected the democratic sentiment of the period. Advanced by the number of emerging civic associations and backed by the reformist-dominated Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance, the new print culture appeared in the form of weekly or monthly magazines and daily newspapers, many of which – like *Salam*, *Asre-Ma*, and *Khordad* – expressed the views of reformist activists who covered various topics and discussed political themes tabooed prior to Khatami's presidency.[1] The daily *Jame'eh* (*Society*) broke new grounds in the publication of pro-reformist news along with critical coverage of the conservative domination of Iranian politics. With the production of numerous reformist newspapers, the late 1990s saw both the opening of a critical sphere of discourse and the conservative reaction of regulating its expansion. Amid the conservative and reformist rivalry, media became a major site of contestation over discourses and symbols of political authority.

In the second half of the Khatami era, media spaces rapidly began to include alternative cultural practices like film, rock, jazz, or pop music and consumptive practices built around leisure spaces of interaction. In a population where the proportion of youth under 30 was growing, a new youth culture would carve out subcultures of cosmopolitan leisure embedded in public domains of everyday consumption and in aesthetics of interaction that ultimately challenged the "public morals" of the Islamist official culture of the state (Khatam, 2010). New urban spaces – some of which, like elegant restaurants and trendy coffee shops, were modeled after lifestyle TV shows aired on European satellite programs – indicated emerging practices in the refashioning of self and the construction of sociability in consumptive spaces of interaction. Though Iranian cinema had already been on the rise by the late Rafsanjani period, under Khatami a new generation of young filmmakers – many women directors and actors among them – had made film a new medium of civic and political activism. Through strategies of metaphors and symbols drawn from Persianate culture, film served the function of a performative medium by displaying, to both domestic and international audiences, social and political discontent over everyday concerns.

The reformist movement helped strengthen the control of civil society over media spaces by extending freedoms of expression and by fostering a public culture of dissent that, recalling Brumburg's account of politics of factionalism, was couched in a competing image of inclusive Islamic democratic polity. But the movement also helped to foster an alternative mode of media activism, namely the Internet. While satellite TV had grown in popularity as a transnational medium of communication, the mid-1990s introduction of cyberspace in Iranian society, especially in the universities, had suddenly provided a new media platform for dissident activism. Given easy accessibility and the absence of strict state supervision, many

reformist news outlets that had been banned before found their way into cyberspace. Younger, computer savvy young Iranians became both audiences and users of this new information; they had exchanges in the form of online news sites, and they disseminated ideas through online chats and, form the 2000s on, through blog activities. Dissident Shi'i clerics like Grand Ayatollah Hussayn-Ali Montazeri (1922–2009) would post their censored books, critical articles, and personal memoir, to offer online an alternative, unofficial narrative of the revolution and of the Islamic polity.

With the Internet, new ways of sociability also emerged that emphasized reimagining social, in particular gender, relations and reflexively reorganized the horizons of possible action in the physical space. In this communicative process, new media like the Internet involved the fact that users had to reinvent themselves, in an attempt to gain alternative conceptions of identity in terms of gender and sexuality – conceptions that should, for instance, empower them to reconstruct reality in ways that would defy the official publics of everyday life. As a public space of virtual interaction, the Internet had now forced its way into everyday life, reconfiguring the Iranian public sphere in reflexive ways that would facilitate greater communicative channels of interaction, hence changing society and state relations in the post-Khatami era.

By the early 2000 Iran saw the ascendency of a neoconservative political movement. At the heart of this new movement lay the drive for revolutionary zeal and a pledge to Khomeini's original mission of establishing a just Islamic society prior to the return of the promised Mahdi. The late Fred Halliday famously described this revolutionary fervor as "a second reassertion of militancy and egalitarianism that rejects domestic elites and external pressure alike," a revival of populism advanced by the new guard with nostalgia for revolution and war, martyrdom and sense of support for the destitute (Halliday, 2005). What distinguished the neo-Khomeinists from other political factions was their renewed emphasis on the collective memory of the war years – a period marked by self-sacrifice, devotion to God, and piety in the face of the inevitability of martyrdom on the front lines of the conflict with Iraq. In this new movement the hardliners were primarily people of nonclerical background, the middle-aged veterans of the Iran–Iraq War. This is the generation that entered university during Rafsanjani's presidency and maintained official positions in the state bureaucracy during the reform period (Ehteshami & Zweiri, 2007).

With the neo-Khomeinist control over major governmental institutions, the communication industry became the first victim of renewed state restrictions. The increase in the censorship of books, films, and the larger print media operated in correlation with enhanced state regulation over satellite television, over mobile communication technologies, and, more importantly, over the Internet service providers (ISPs) led by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and the Telecommunication Company of Iran (TCI). Though Internet filtering had already been institutionalized since 2001, between 2005 and 2009 the Iranian cybersphere saw a rise in sophisticated uses of the filtering system as a technical mechanism for

regulating online content (Rahimi, 2008, pp. 46–48; Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010, pp. 61–86). Such filtering techniques also involved a surveillance of online communication that mainly operated in gathering information on dissident activities.

Under the growing influence of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the political sphere during the first half of Ahmadinejad's presidency, governance of the Internet gradually moved away from the judiciary and the Internet came under the supervision of the intelligence ministry. By 2009 – a year characterized by post-election unrest and by the rise of the Green Movement, which challenged the presidency of Ahmadinejad and authoritarianism under the Islamic Republic – the Internet had become a focal concern for the intelligence services, which increasingly gained influence in the security-conscious system of governance; the aim was to establish a sophisticated network of surveillance and intelligence-gathering, so as to stifle dissent. The development of securitization apparatuses in the post-election period did not, however, exclude judiciary clampdowns on Internet activists. As the arrest of prominent bloggers in January 2012 demonstrates, the courts periodically unleash campaigns of intimidation, particularly prior to major elections, when the possibility of anti-government activism increases online (Gladstone & Afkhami, 2012).

The rise in popularity of blogs, along with mobile texting, underlines a new social configuration of post-revolutionary media activities that revolve around the *individuation* of communication and the integration of personalized or customized media content – in other words, content that matches a person's unique voice or mix of views and interests – into the interconnected spaces of the physical and the virtual sphere of everyday life. The "I" in "I-media" denotes not individualism, but personalized ways of socialization, done via thinly interwoven set of networks of interactions; and these interactions take place in new media spaces, where new meanings, understandings, and discourses of self and society are (de-)constructed – both in subtle ways and publicly. The proliferation of blogs, for example, underscores an alternative communicative practice, which entails discourses of refashioning the self in personalized frames – schematics of interpretations that, in words of Erving Goffman, help individuals "to locate, perceive, identify and label" experiences (Goffman, 1974, p. 2) and ultimately shape new social environments. These framing processes and experiential domains are produced in the context of social dynamics that ultimately become "politically saturated" (Butler, 2009, p. 76).

From 2001 to 2009 this political dimension became evident in the blogosphere, as many dissidents turned to blogs to express opinions and views that could not be expressed in the print media, closely managed and censored as these were after the first half of Khatami's presidency. In weblogs artists, journalists, political activists, and other marginal groups created new discursive spaces, where new voices and self-narratives became realized.[2] The arrest and even execution of bloggers in the first half of Ahmadinejad's presidency testifies to the regime's growing concern over the burgeoning political communication on blogs. Though between 2006 and 2008 the intelligence organs of the state, led by the IRGC, attempted to proactively engage with the blogosphere to construct pro-government cyberspaces,

blogging remained an activity of non-state actors, many of whom would publish online personal poetry, literary texts, jokes, rumors, gossip, and other unofficial pieces of everyday language.[3]

Post-revolutionary Iranian media took an innovative turn with the introduction of online social networking sites like Balatarin (a Persian language community website), Twitter, YouTube and, more importantly, Facebook, which became popular in the months prior to the 2009 elections. The generation of unofficial news through the interactive use of mobile technologies, online social networking, and international television media, mainly on user-generated sites such as CNN's (Cable News Network's) iReport, brings to view a distinct kind of multidirectional communication process, where individuation plays a central role in the production of news and in the circulation of information.

In the pre-election period in 2009, the social media also produced new network associations that combined older and newer mediated modes of sociability so as to express disagreement through various uses of the available information technology. This convergence of old and new media explains the emergence of complex mediated social imaginaries of self and reality that have increasingly led to the *fragmentation* of communication processes and to individuated practices of representing (narrating) oneself and reality in shifting contexts of state and society relations. Concurrently, this fragmentation process has produced a host of intersecting ephemeral publics whose notions and practices of intimacy, tastes, corporeality, politics, and the sacred are relentlessly negotiated and reimagined in response to complex power relations embedded in people's everyday life.

The Internet and the Green Movement

While the individuation of mediated communication played a critical role in post-election dissident activism, namely in the innovation of new personalized narratives and genres of digital interaction, it was through its capacity to mobilize support and to construct a virtual community of activists that the Internet made its most significant impact during the 2009 elections. As Mir-Hussayn Mousavi, the main reformist candidate with appeal to a broad cross-section of Iranians, announced his bid for presidency in March 2009, a movement characterized by the participation of a new cosmopolitan Internet–mobile-connected youth emerged to support the new candidate. The new activist community, later known as the Green Movement, arose from the political ambience of the electoral competition, which was characterized by a collective exuberance about challenging the presidency of Ahmadinejad through demands for a more inclusive political order. As early as April 2009, the movement had unleashed a new political culture, which quickly identified with an expanding campaign that heavily relied on the computer-savvy youth for its electoral activism and for a platform for the recruitment of new activists, especially in urban settings.

In the pre-election period, Mousavi's supporters comprised a cross-section of the society that included artists, university students, intellectuals, middle-class

professionals, (unemployed) workers, reformist religious associations, and women activists.[4] Enthusiastic about capitalizing on the growing discontent, these people began to participate in various campaign rallies organized in stadiums or in the streets and characterized mostly by a newly made repertoire of signs, slogans, songs, symbols, and discourses.[5] They waved and wore green; this color identified symbolically with a new electoral politics, mostly known in the pre-election period as *moj-e sabz* or "the Green Wave."[6] In the expanding campaign, the color green, associated with Iranian nationalism and Islam, served as a subtle but effective call for a new beginning.[7] Under the watchful eyes of an authoritarian theocracy that banned festive activities under the regime law, Mousavi's supporters danced, sang, and chanted anti-government slogans on the streets of Tehran and other major cities.

Several strategies were used in cyberspace (and with other electronic means of communication) to promote Mousavi's candidacy. First, campaigners – many of them computer savvy youth – coordinated rallies in stadiums or streets through the official campaign website (www.mirhossein.com), through Flicker or Twitter, and through cell phone text messages (Christensen, 2011, p. 243; Hashem & Najjar, 2010, p. 127; Kurzman, 2010).[8] While word-of-mouth dissemination accelerated the transmission of campaign news, the new social networking sites, some of which had been unknown in the 2005 elections, became the backbone of the Green electoral campaign. In February 2009, when the state unblocked Facebook, this site became a key campaign platform, promoting Mousavi, with his image and his ideas, as the representative of the first new reformist politics since the era of Mohammad Khatami's presidency. Specifically, through Mousavi's Facebook site – which was launched by Mohammad Sadeghi-Isfahanali, a young graduate student based in Germany, one day before the inauguration of Barak Obama in January 19, 2009 (Petrossian, 2010) – campaigners would organize public events that would, at times, spontaneously grow into major street-level rallies (Rahimi, 2011, pp. 158–160).

Second, social networking sites established strategic forums for the exchange of ideas and for the spreading of news, at both national and transnational levels. Sadeghi-Isfahanali explains this creative strategic measure as the "process innovation to incorporate existing social network platforms into the Persian language media bandwidth" (Petrossian, 2010; see also Sadeghi-Isfahanali, 2010, p. 60).[9] The new media's impact on mass media with regard to shifting the periphery–center boundaries of information circulation recalls similar strategies introduced by other social movements, for example the Zapatistas, in order to insert alternative news reports into traditional news outlets (Bennett, 2003, p. 153). In a transnational setting, campaigners and lay supporters benefit from the instantaneous transmission of information and news via blogs, websites, SMS (short message service), and other social network sites and invite each other not only to manage logistics but to eliminate the need for costly and time-consuming physical distribution of information (Gheytanchi & Rahimi, 2009). The aim, in many ways, remains to influence mainstream local and global news coverage of the events on the ground and to bypass the dominant news gatekeepers in order to change public opinion.

For example, Kalame-ye Sabz (Green Word), Mousavi camp's licensed print newspaper, which has a large audience in its online version (http://kaleme.com/), circulated election news that were often ignored by the official print and TV media. As a cheap and a swift means of global communication, not limited by geographical distance, sites like Balatarin and Facebook, with their links to other Mousavi websites, had a transformative effect on communication in that they facilitated a flexible, horizontal, and unmediated platform for promoting a self-image of the movement that would appeal to the larger public, increase recruitment, bolster citizens' participation in electoral campaigns, and extend grassroots organizations and support for the electoral campaign across the globe.[10]

Third, and in a significant way, the social networking's self-promotional strategy had also become a force, shaping, in Bennett's words, "both the relations among organizations and in some cases, the organizations themselves" (Bennett, 2003, p. 156). Early in its development, Facebook emerged as the campaign's means for organizing and staging an image of the movement as a polycentric association of ordinary citizens. The combined logistical and identification complex of cybersocial networking sites generated a dispersive mode of activism in a group of like-minded citizens, some of whom were previously "unwired" activists now sharing a cause and a common sense of political identity against those in power. With the approaching elections, online network campaign sites increasingly became a source of knowledge, a space for the circulation of emotional ties, and a site where one could identify with a living collective movement. This movement increasingly shaped an epistemic community, a network of knowledge-based activists, many of whom were unprofessional or "citizen staff" (as the campaign called them) with well-defined problems and solutions (Bennett, 2003).

In the field of social movement studies, this type of social cognition is referred to as a "collective action frame." Such frames are schemas of interpretation or cognitive strategies lighting up specific or generic themes, issues, problems or solutions in to order to incite to action (see, for example, Entman, 1993; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Reese, 2007; Snow & Benford, 1988). This framing process is critical for understanding the Green Wave, especially at its initial stage of developing a network movement that largely expanded in communicative spaces. Social networking forums are among the key strategic sites where framing and rhetoric of injustice, stories, tales, news, and new grammars of sociability would take place. By using frames and by staging the scope of existing conflicts and possible changes to the political power, online network sites created shared identities – "joint action in pursuit of common ends," as Charles Tilly (1978, p. 84) described them – in correlation with perceived opportunities for action or threats of domination. Facebook most effectively underscored this political functioning of the framing process. Aesthetic objects of an auditory–visual nature – like Mousavi's campaign film, slogans, and songs – circulated on various official and unofficial Mousavi Facebook sites, underscoring an expressive mechanism to capture the terms of public discourse and widening the scope of electoral contestation. As a multiple framing strategy, this element of the cultural repertoire

aimed to make the campaign's ideology and statements more coherent and to bolster solidarity in the organizing of association ties and identity.

The correlation between framing strategies, viewed as performative actions, and the organizational structure of the movement can be characterized, primarily, in terms of sparse network ties, where associations are rather tenuous and limited to micro publics of everyday life. Erving Goffman, the American microsociologist, described such forms of sociability as ephemeral sites of interaction that briefly release individuals from their institutional embeddings (Goffman, 1963). These ephemeral publics mark a process of mitigation of boundaries that fosters new kinds of online interactivity, developed on the basis of affective sociability or what Mousavi has called *mohabbat va olfat-e ijtema'i* – "social empathy and affinity" (Dabashi, 2010, p. 132). According to Mousavi, social affinities operate as a collective force that closely resembles what Castells has famously described as a networked social movement, collective actions that take place interactively in the digitally processed information networks with both local and global coalition trajectories (Castells, 2001).

However, Mousavi's notion of social affinity emphasizes the role of emotions more than that of information – together with a social imaginary of empathy that configures close ties with others; these are organized in autonomous units, linked through associations of felt experiences. As Hamid Dabashi notes, in Mousavi's vision, this social organization operates on a "further cultivation of the subterranean (Internet-based) social networking that was creating unprecedented modes of group affiliation" (Dabashi, 2010, p. 134). The Internet, in other words, is a network of networks through which online activism promotes a collectively shared experience of constituting a community. This emotive element would be signaled through a networked production of images, affects, and symbols of the community that could be felt and imagined in the absence of face-to-face interaction in material settings. Felt experiences of affiliation (or affective bonds) would promote an image of the movement as outsiders should view it. In many affective ways, the early Green Wave sustained a nascent organizational effectiveness at making certain emotions (like anger against the political establishment) legitimate motivations for electoral participation.[11] Such emotions were strategically responsible for the creation of social capital on the basis of hope, trust, and even rage. Nevertheless, in an authoritarian environment, the cultivation of social affinities has it limits, as the unfolding of events after elections made evident.

In the pre-electoral stage, the relationship between offline and online network activism was still visible. This was because the Mousavi campaign had legal permission to coordinate activities through various strategic channels, including the Internet, so as to self-promote and logistically prepare for election day. Moreover, since the Internet was used mostly for instrumental purposes, the relatively open environment of the campaign season helped distinguish offline and online activism. Strategic communications were overtly developed for winning the elections, despite being under surveillance from the authorities.

However, with the publication, on June 13, 2009, of the election's results (originally announced through pro-government websites like Fars News), the

Green Wave underwent a radical transformation, both in its strategic activities and in its identity formation (Ansari, 2010, p. 57). The defining turning point occurred merely two hours after the election ballots closed, when Ahmadinejad was declared winner by a wide margin of votes.[12] The news came as a shock to the Mousavi camp. Yet it was not the possibility of fraud that astonished the Green supporters, since accusations of vote-tampering and electoral irregularities had also been made in the 2005 election; the difference in the numbers of votes is what aroused shock and anger. This affective reflex can be described, in Castells's formulation, as a "moral shock": an incident or an event that provokes such an intense feeling of indignation "in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action." This sort of emotion is based on a moral understanding that would mobilize a movement to engage in confrontational activities with the powers to be. The moral aspect of the shock is, however, more than a reception: it is a reaction to a critical event that could be deemed unjust by actors. Moreover, the shock generates disruption in the perception of reality and a sense of expectation of how a political system should operate.

Outraged at the election's results, the electoral activists underwent a substantive transformation as their performative network changed from campaign platforms to street and rooftop sites of demonstrations. Facebook sites that promoted Mousavi's candidacy and likewise coordinated political rallies now became increasingly communicative by assembling sites for staging emotions such as disenchantment and rage. Just days after the elections, protesters engaged in collective actions of a contentious nature, which involved the production and performance of multiple frames through visual images, slogans, songs, or silent demonstrations both offline and online that drew the media's attention and, more importantly, redefined the movement as an opposition current with new claims, not just on the electoral institution but on the entire state. The interplay between the material and the symbolic became more pronounced. In many ways, the spectacle of street protests in daytime and audios of chants and slogans on roof-tops during the night became ends in themselves. Slogans such as "where is my vote?" would mark rhetorical questions that served as a strategic means of questioning the elections and – more importantly – of identifying forums for the collective discontent about alleged missing votes. The affective force of the shock, in the form of rage, gave birth to the movement's core self-image and to the imaginary generated by it.

In response to authoritarian measures imposed by the regime, the post-election period saw the movement being increasingly engaged in various performative practices of contestation that heavily relied on its network structure to express and communicate dissent. In this second phase, which spanned from election day to the final series of harsh though successful crackdowns on the street protesters in February 2010, the growing shift from offline to online activism began to take place not only because of diminishing opportunities to appear in public spaces but also as a result of increasing chances to engage in creative confrontational strategies with the powerholders in digital space. Again, Internet-generated activism created a sense of solidarity for offline activism too – for example in street demonstrations, as they staged political contestation and engagement with the state.

At an offensive strategic level, immediately after elections the Internet by and large moved from being a self-promotional mobilizing medium toward being a self-generative news outlet. As organized marches (some of them announced on Mousavi's official website or on his Facebook site) grew in size amid bloody clampdowns, the protesters gathered reports and posted news or cell phone videos of police brutality on networking sites. YouTube suddenly emerged as a central spectacle platform, as news channels would download and show images of demonstrations to a global audience. Despite the slow speed of the Internet, activists disseminated clips of demonstrations and police brutality through e-mail and Facebook.[13] With the capture of the death of Neda Agha-Sultan on a cell phone camera on June 20, Facebook became the first site to show recorded images of the events. The dissemination process operated through intra-media linkages that went from social networking sites to mainstream media outlets in just a matter of hours (Assman & Assmann, 2010, pp. 225–242). Twitter, though marginal in the dissemination of news (Howard, 2010, p. 9; Morozov, 2011, pp. 14–19; Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010, pp. 174–76), facilitated the instantaneous spread of stories like Neda's to a global audience (M. M. J. Fischer, 2010, p. 105). Despite filters and slow Internet connections, Persian-speaking sites like Balatarin and Donbaleh, with multiple linking webs, provided protesters with a clandestine network of activists who cooperated, mostly anonymously, in the dissemination of minute-by-minute information and news on the protests.

The framing strategy of covering the news about the protests through the protesters themselves aimed at capturing the emotive and visual scope of the global and national public opinion. Yet, more importantly, the audio sound and the visuals of the demonstrations helped legitimize the movement's ongoing attempts to challenge the state, prolong the contestation, and ultimately deprive those in power of legitimacy. The process of framing the news produced by the new media requires, in this sense, the rhetorical and symbolic ability to constantly define the events on the ground, on the basis of symbolic distinctions of what constitutes the ground for adversity, what counts as just and unjust, what counts as moral and immoral. As a response to the moral shock effect, the postings and circulation of images, signs, shouts, cries from protesters through the Internet would operate as shocking mechanisms themselves – an emotive strategy of inciting public support and mobilization against the external other, namely the state.

Meanwhile, as the repression of demonstrations and the surveillance of electronic media of communication grew and effectively spread fear in the opposition's camp at street level, boundary-making operations began to make themselves manifest mostly online. Hackactivism, the subversive practice of digital re-appropriation of cyberspace through assaults on websites deemed to represent power, provided visible indication of the boundaries that the Green activists sought to delegitimize – and hence distinguish from an imagined moral order. The defacement of certain government websites such as Far News, Keyhan News, and Ahmadinejad's homepage was identified not only as an effective way to disrupt the adversary's flow of communication, but also as a symbolic attempt to dramatize what is external and lacks identity

(or visibility) in terms of moral authority. Defacement marks the performative social field that differentiates between "us and them," denying the adversary's identity and its legitimacy to exist. Boundary making would also involve other hacking processes, like creating Google bombs or redirecting official state websites to an anti-government slogan – all of which underline a process of distinguishing between vying actors, between good and evil, between what can and what cannot legitimatey exist.

Boundary construction has other significant performative implications for the identity of the movement. Internet activity can enhance the performative repertoire of the post-election movement in the course of networking activism, as a distinct social reality that constitutes new relations between displays of contentious practices and their meanings. The core of such identity transformation lies in the configuration of a hybrid reality between the human world and the computer worlds, which Bruno Latour has identified with the blurring boundaries between technology and social reality constructions (Latour, 1992). Such blurring effect can be characterized through the dynamics of deconstructing social boundaries – a transformative process of destabilizing the limits of the known (social) reality by introducing a new sense of existence, designed to reshape everyday social relations (Rahimi, 2011, p. 169). The transformative (subjective) impact here comes from the type of social relations identified in the "idiom" of dramatic practices.

In the case of the post-election Green Movement, protesters who obscured their offline identities by engaging in dissenting activism on various online networking sites tended to situate politics not merely in the physical domain, but also in a liminal realm of social networking and interaction, among mediating technologies like computers and cell phones, which dissolve the everyday accepted boundaries between the "real" and the "virtual" world. Dabashi described the liminal element as the "exponential expansion of the public domain into cyberspace, to the point that it has had a catalytic, and arguably overwhelming, effect on physical space" (Dabashi, 2010, p. 135). In this view, the collapsing of cyberspace into physical space highlights a performative staging of contention that reconfigures the way politics is perceived and practiced in "real" life. Manoukian calls this reconfiguration a "crisis of representation," the confluence of street-protest participation and new media representations in the form of citizen reportages that construct an alternative "spatiotemporal coordination" and new ways of inserting meaning into the events unfolding on the ground (Manoukian, 2010, pp. 247–250).

At this stage in the movement's development, cyberspace exceeded its functional role as a means of mobilization and became a communicative network of meaning-laden media activities. Such practices, operating dispersedly, identified the core of network activists operational and visible in the virtual public sphere as an "Internetworked social movement" (Langman, 2005). With the Internet playing an increasing role in the dissemination of subversive information, in the proliferation of dissident interactive relations, and in the formation of emotive links within a networked movement after the summer of 2009, it is no wonder that the regime saw online activity as a serious threat. From the day of elections, the regime engaged in several strategies to defuse Internet activism and to annul its capacity to impact

offline activism. One method was to slow down the Internet and to bolster filtering techniques – measures, already implemented since the late 1990s, when the new medium began to become popular among Iranian dissidents (Rahimi, 2008). Another method was to hack and deface pro-Mousavi sites and, subsequently, limit the activists' communication links with mainstream satellite TV programs like Al-Jazeera or CNN. Insertion of conflicting or misleading information in the real-time accounts of I-reports of protesters was also an effective way of obliterating the significance of a potentially harmful story (like the death of Neda), which could help the opposition gain support from the national and the global publics. But the most effective strategy appeared to be the extension of online governance. As a feature of the securitization process that dates back to 2006, when the intelligence units of the IRGC became more engaged with Internet activism (Rahimi, 2011, p. 171), surveillance marked the most effective way to gather information and document the opposition's activities.

Just months before elections, the newly formed intelligence unit, known as the Iranian Cyber Army, introduced the Gerdab (Vortex) project – an intelligence-gathering scheme with the capacity to identify dissident activities and their network ties. Various advanced technological espionage devices were employed, including Nokia Siemens System's deep packet inspections, with the ability to monitor and change online communication (Chao & Rhoads, 2009). By August 2009, after the regime had successfully limited the size and frequency of the anti-government demonstrations, surveillance over the Internet became an effective soft measure against the activists. The key strategic element in the state's soft war against the Green Movement, viewed by the regime as part of a larger CIA-led Velvet Revolution around the globe, was not the attempt to collect information but, more importantly, the ability to arouse fear in the opposition. Such strategy would operate in the idiom of rumors and misinformation; it would capitalize on the movement's weak, informal ties based on the Internet as a way to create suspicion and paranoia. Nevertheless, such emotive strategy facilitated the disruption of the coherence of perceptions and self-images that would set the stage for solidifying a collective identity. Undermining trust is at the core of this soft measure, a way of dislocating meaningful relations that can be made in both offline and online network communities. By destabilizing the shared sense of belonging, surveillance practices would undermine the motivational framework for participation and, ultimately, would decrease resistance.

By (early) 2010, the intelligence and security forces were able to finally realize the effectiveness of their soft strategy of using the anonymity of the cyberspace to infiltrate and spread rumors, fears, and misinformation within the movement. Though the regime was unable to prevent the Ashura demonstrations in December 2009, the surveillance and sabotage activities finally saw the successful disruption of the next big day of demonstrations, on the thirty-first year of the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution: February 11, 2010. The Green Movement was declared dead by the regime and its leading figures were detained at home or put in prison.

In many ways, the return of the Green Movement on February 14, 2011, largely in response to the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings, came as a huge surprise to the

authorities. While the Internet still played the sort of logistical means to organize the new demonstrations, the framework of cyberactivism in terms of collective action and identity building had now changed. In its post-Ashura form, the Green Movement had become a community of remembrance built around a repertoire of memorial performances that recalled the earlier protest days and the movement's fallen members, known as martyr activists like Neda, Kianoush Asa, Morad Aghasi, and Sohrab Erabi. Nostalgia would now function as a type of affective commitment; it would have the aim to renew the social affinities of the movement. As archival sites, Internet sites like Facebook would have a collection of photos, videos, statements, symbolic depictions, and poetical narratives of the movement, its members, and the leading figures. A photo of Mousavi, giving a speech in the middle of a crowd just days after the elections, recalled the period when many still expected an eventual recount of votes that would ensure their victory in the elections.

Through emotions of social solidarity based on complex moral understandings, movements have the capacity to reinvent. Remembering the past would provide an imaginary path for a new start. In the course of shifting identities, movements require new definitions in a powerful language that incorporates a direction toward a new beginning, a new framework of thinking, constructed through interaction and through demands for renewed emotional investments in a given situation marked by new opportunities. The late Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci, described this identity (re)construction capacity inherent in all collectivities, especially in new social movements, as "an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the *orientations* of their action and the *field* of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place" (Melucci, 1996, p. 70). While the "field" represents the situations that actors find themselves in, "orientation" identifies meaningful actions that enable actors to feel they are part of a collective identity that can be reshaped according to the emerging opportunities for action. Orientations define the symbolic direction and the meaningful capacity for actors to create new ideas, concepts, and expectations of themselves and their movement amid shifting situations.

In this discursive process, expectations of what the movement can (or should) do entail orientations of action with affective traits. Hopes and promises of emancipation sustain a balance between how a movement adapts to "reality" and how it, paradoxically and perpetually, seeks to undermine it. The Internet marks a distinct, interactive site, where such sentiments gain currency within an unmediated space of communication. In his *The Digital Sublime*, Vincent Mosco argues that cyberspace both represents and creates myths and symbols of human action, empowerment and experiences of space and time, which "animate individuals and societies by providing paths to transcendence that lift people out of the banality of everyday life (Mosco, 2004, p. 3). Myths, in this sense, play a central performative role in movements like the Green Movement, which continue to live on in cyberspace in their Internet–network forms. As flexible frameworks for reasoning about reality, stories, rumors, hopes, and expectations of a possible return or resurrection carry a mythic force, which

operates in a disjoint time and space. Foresight of a time of confrontation that has the possibility of victory demands a new way of *thinking* about social reality.

Political myths, writes the French theorist George Sorel, "are not descriptions of things but expressions of a will to act" (Sorel, 1941, p. 28). As interpretive performances, myths define the scope of action, giving it the authority to foretell a battle marked with morality, a struggle between good and evil that eventually will be won through justice. Yet, in anticipation of spontaneous combat, myths operate as moral frames that maintain a sense of shared identity despite the fragmentation of social affinity as a result of state measures taken in order to dismantle the movement. This self-maintaining strategy lies at the core of memory and mythic narratives and practices. As performative networks, activists rely on social dramas of commemoration and spontaneous action in order to preserve a movement's collective identity and a sense of belonging to it. The Internet, therefore, not only communicates to participants the memories of injustice and the myth of return, but also plays out these powerful narratives as a network or a living promise of a future yet to be realized.

In this third phase of development, the relationship between the Internet and the social movement lies in affinities of networks and in contentious performances of a highly dramatic tone. Performances, staged within intricate domains of offline and online spaces, define the movement as a mythic force, reminding the participants and the audience of the eventual return, which can be both announced and re-enacted in cyberspace. And it is precisely in this mythic force that the Internet configures the activist relations with the "movement" as something that stages new possibilities. In making reality a mythical terrain of rethinking reality, especially in its political manifestation, Internet becomes a set of changing constructs that is negotiated at both the individual and the collective levels, between protesters and audiences, but is never entirely reduced to them.

In this chapter I sketched out a theoretical outline of Internet activism in the context of post-election Iran. I have been equally concerned with the instrumental implications of the Internet and its creative aspects in the form of performative practices. The Internet as a performative practice is an unstable and contentious field of action, produced out of the uneven milieu of political orders and changing technologies as they manifest themselves in widely varying and shifting situations. Internet activism, I also argued, is about how felt experiences of a largely collective manifestation go beyond the mere coordination of political action, marking alternative ways of practicing politics that are potentially threatening to state power, especially of the authoritarian form. As a social technology, Internet stages new possibilities for action and new experiences of politics.

Notes

1 Between 1998 and 1999 alone, 168 new publications were approved by the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance (Sreberny & Khiabany, 2001, p. 207).

2 For studies on Iranian blogs, see Sreberny and Khiabany, 2010; Amir-Ebrahimi, 2009; Doostdar, 2004; Hendelman-Baavur, 2007.

3 For IRGC promotion of pro-government blogs and other Internet activities, see Rahimi, 2011, pp. 170–172 and Sreberny and Khiabany, 2010, p. 85.
4 Fieldwork observation, Tehran, April–June 2009.
5 This was so since, according to Iranian election laws, electoral campaigns can only begin weeks before election day.
6 Later, after the elections and the subsequent state crackdowns, *Moj-e sabz* was informally changed to *Jebh-e sabz* ("the Green Front") or *Jonbesh-e sabz* ("the Green Movement").
7 Green represents the sacred family of the Prophet, whom Shi'i Muslims, the largest segment of the Iranian population, revere. Green also served as a nationalistic symbol, primarily associated with the festive culture of rebirth of the Persian New Year, which is celebrated in the beginning of spring. In the later stage of the movement, after elections, the color became increasingly associated with demonstrations and served as a "symbol of protest" against the election results and even against the entire political system (M. M. J. Fischer, 2010, p. 363).
8 The widespread use of information technologies was confirmed by the author's fieldwork in the weeks prior to the elections.
9 As Sadeghi-Isfahanali elaborates on the dynamics of process innovation, "the most important added value was the development of an international staff framework for media activities in social networks by linking and incorporating other virtual tools and initiating a broader virtual accessibility to the virtual – and not necessarily political – society" (Sadeghi-Isfahanali, 2010, p. 60).
10 Although the site was briefly filtered days before the election, Facebook remained unblocked until the day of elections, June 12.
11 On the relationship between emotions and social movements see, for example, Aminzade and McAdam, 2001; Groves, 1997; Taylor, 1995.
12 Ahmadinejad won 64% of the votes, while Mousavi took 34%. The other two candidates, Mehdi Karoubi and Mohsen Rezaie, together won the remaining 2% votes (Kamrava, 2010).
13 The spread of video clips most likely was done through higher-speed Internet networks based in business institutions.

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Part VI

Conclusion

50

Looking Ahead to a New Generation of Media and Mass Communication Theory

P. Mark Fackler and Robert S. Fortner

What is ahead for media and mass communication theory? We have to admit at the outset that, as the cliché goes, prognostication is a dangerous business. We think, however, having researched our own essays and read the remainder of those in these volumes, that we can make some reasonable suggestions as to where the field might be headed – at least in the short to medium term. We also want not to claim too much, for our crystal ball is probably nearly as cloudy as that of anyone who decides to read what we have to say. So we have decided to approach this task in the form of a dialogue, testing one another, probing, throwing in a caveat here and there, to indicate that there are legitimate objections that could be raised to our suggestions, not only by us but by anyone else who chooses to see what we have to say.

Mark Visionaries in the world of business predict a rush to establish protean corporations, small standalone businesses, some as small as a single person, yet corporations nonetheless (The Protean Corporation, 2009). Partly to shoulder a new round of federal regulations, these proteans are essentially departments of larger units but now connected through contract, not through employment. The trend sounds remarkably similar to advice emanating from college and university career development centers to prospective graduates: your first corporate job may be a solo venture. To recall a mantra from the 1970s, "small is beautiful" (see Schumacher, 1973). Corporations made up of a dozen workers or less will be attached to other small corporations, and thus will the economic machinery of America's future say farewell to the standard model of employment and welcome entrepreneurial niche start-ups shorn of long-term obligations, capable of flexibility – corporate "shape-shifters" for years to come.

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I suggest the model may be apt for the next stage of communication and media theory.The forefathers have spoken, and so have their second-generation elaborators and commentators. John Dewey gave "the public" an intellectual name; James Carey carried Dewey into communications studies explicitly. George Herbert Mead brought gesture and symbol to the academy; Herbert Blumer named this line of study "symbolic interactionism" and the University of Chicago became its fertile field of growth. There, too, Robert Park made the study of mass communication a research priority. W. W. Charters then directed the Payne Fund studies (1929–1932), one of the "largest scientific studies ever conducted on media effects" (Rogers, 1994, p. 191). Wilbur Schramm, Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Carl Hovland all gave focus to communication theory with books, reports, commissions, all spread by new colleges at midwestern land-grant universities. The ill-received but vastly influential Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press issued its report, *A Free and Responsible Press*, in 1947. While its media sponsors scorned its alleged intrusions into press autonomy, academics around the world used the report as a barometer for their own media–government relations and published many studies applying the Commission's conclusions to changing political arrangements everywhere, especially as the Cold War warmed.

The growth of mass communications research institutions, journals, and scholarly associations is one of the headline stories of the last 60 years in American scholarship. Similar growth is now appearing around the world. The first master's degree program opened at Addis Ababa University in 2003; the first PhD program in Kenya opened in 2009. This story is replicated in Latin America, Asia, and, belatedly, Europe, though the old continent rightly claims its outstanding scholars. The newer, dynamic institutions and think-tank start-ups are largely driven by recent access to the Internet and mobile phone devices, not to mention the critical questions rumbling through young, developing democracies. Will the future of mass communications research find a new vocabulary in these varied places? Certainly. Will researchers articulate new paradigms by which the field of communications studies will reset its theoretical anchorage? To resist such a conclusion would unconscionably foreclose a future of innovation: not a move that communications theorists anywhere would endorse.

Robert What Mark has suggested here is certainly one route that theorizing might take given the continuing development of major universities outside the Western orbit. A large number of academics in China, India, and Africa, particularly, have at this point been trained in Western institutions, and a disproportionate number of them in the United States, so this scenario may be one that will develop slowly only as more indigenously produced scholars take their places in the academy. But there are at least two other possibilities as well.

One is that theory development will continue along its current paths. As these volumes show, there are multiple pathways followed in efforts to make sense out of media and mass communication. Some of these pathways are driven by methodologies – and not necessarily theoretical development – and

others by intellectual traditions. Given the conservatism of the academy, it is conceivable that both of these factors will continue to animate much theory talk until such time as new methodologies or new intellectual traditions emerge. Since theory in the empirical traditions of media study fit within the larger orbit of the social sciences, however, and our intellectual traditions are closely engaged with both history and philosophies that are themselves unyielding, those who propose any significant change in theory construction in our own discipline may find themselves straying too far from the "mainstream" of an essentially conservative institution reluctant to change. I suspect that the intellectual traditions grounded in what Mark has called the "forefathers" may well continue with little change indefinitely.

The other possibility is that research results themselves, or new media technologies, will compel the development of a new paradigm for understanding mediated communication. Already we struggle to apply current approaches to a system that has gone "rogue" on us – the one-to-many reality of "old media" has had to take account of user-generated content (many to many), the truncated and spontaneously created videos of YouTube that perhaps owe more to TV commercials than to long-form programs as the model for their creation, and the efforts to stuff novels into 140-character tweets, which must give some pause when faced with the question of "following" such an endeavor or waiting for the e-novel to be "published" by Amazon. Barriers to entry have fallen. Newspapers are producing videos for their websites, magazines are reformatted to fit on tablets, and on-air broadcasting organizations find themselves driven to take their viewers and listeners to their websites for more information. The systems are still transforming, remaking themselves, to account for new behaviors in a world where those who use the media do so more on their own terms than traditional media want to accept. Voting for the best Superbowl commercial in real time? Having to respond to blogs from disgruntled airline passengers, or having a proactive approach to PR by trolling for negative references to clients? Confronting mash-ups in news coverage, or remixes and recuts of music and video that cavalierly steamroll intellectual property? Depending on amateur photographers, videographers, Facebookers and tweeters to tell publics what is happening in inaccessible locations? Dealing with mockery of programs that used to be produced with a "take it or leave it" attitude? None of our current theories adequately provides a way forward to understanding these brash uses of the media by the "great unwashed." And yet they are there – and more. In some respects those of us who have been trained in communication scholarship are like the classical physicists suddenly confronted with the inexplicable reality of quantum mechanics. Our assumptions about the universe have proven inadequate for the new realities. As William Butler Yeats put it in 1921:

> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity. (Yeats, 1997)

MARK What, then, might we expect from these protean centers of theorizing on symbol, culture, and meaning making?

I anticipate less arduous cheerleading for exclusively empirical or exclusively qualitative studies, as these two traditions of data collecting merge around the convulsive public issues that drive communications studies forward. Presently in the United States, a polarized debate is underway concerning gun control. Should citizens have the legal right to own and carry guns? Once the party politics surrounding the debate is exhausted, important questions will emerge concerning the demographics of gun ownership and usage, criminal habits, and mediated violence as a catalyst for gun violence. Guidance for public policy will require informed interpretations of perceived messages from film, television, video games, Internet pseudo-personas, cultural archetypes, and explicit calls to violence (including violence in intimate relationships) throughout popular culture. Ronny Zamora will be forever remembered for the "inventive, if ridiculous defense" at his murder trial in 1978, that he should not be found guilty because he had been "temporarily deprived of his sanity due to television intoxication" (Celebrity, 2009). With an up-tick in unaccountable violence perpetrated by teenagers with guns, how long will the Zamora defense stand alone as one lawyer's original courtroom defense? Yet no show of statistical data predicts the behavior of anyone.

In Kenya in late 2007, a close and contested election led to public violence, including police killings, brutal incinerations, and internally displaced persons still afraid of returning to their fields and home. The story of media's role in that tragedy is told in a sister handbook to this one (Fackler, Obonyo, Terpstra, & Okaalet, 2011), and the ongoing work of scholars to understand the aftermath, indeed the way forward, is told therein. Media news coverage then, and media commentary explaining events to Kenyan readers and listeners now, are central aspects of that crisis. Will description, then interpretation, then policy debate, lead to theoretical postulates that gain traction by virtue of supporting the data and wise applications? This is already underway.

As funding agencies discover the good work coming from India, Zambia, Nicaragua – perhaps our future elites – we may expect new syntheses of formerly oppositional methodologies, new directions attached less to East–West ideologies and more to the aspirations of emerging networks of people who find significant loyalties, without regard to national boundaries or to the variables or rhetoric of first-generation theorizing.

ROBERT One of the shortfalls of American theorizing about the media has been that it has developed within a cultural construct of individualism and liberty. This results in efforts to aggregate atomistic individuals into groups defined by demographic variables and then to treat them as a collective. This often means that the only path to understanding is the "abstracted empiricism" that defined the social science universe for C. Wright Mills. In this universe scholars could only adequately understand television violence (and, more recently, videogame violence) through

the aggregation of individual behaviors tested against control groups, or through the collection of interviews conducted among a randomly selected population – so that the few would represent the whole and predictions could be made about everything, from aggression to voting and the selection of products in the grocery aisle. Methodologies have been improved again and again, in efforts to make understanding more comprehensive or prediction more reliable, all because of this underlying philosophical commitment of the American experiment.

But the United States is unlike most of the rest of the world. Even Europeans are more class-oriented and tribal than Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, or Canadians. And most of the rest of the planet is peopled by groups (clans, tribes, ethnic groups, communities) that are far more collectivist and communitarian in orientation than individualist Westerners. Knowing about caste status (even if officially unrecognized) is still critical in most people's everyday lives in India and Nepal, because of the philosophical–religious orientation of Hinduism. Knowing ethnic status still matters hugely across China where the Han rule, and across much of the former Soviet empire as well. In Africa the mixture of tribe and language, of history and cultural tradition often makes it difficult to disentangle the individual from the group, and Africans still identify themselves by the village where they were born rather than by the place where they currently reside. In Latin America people are divided not only by their wealth and heritage (Spanish heritage being valued more highly than mestizo or native roots), but also by a more recent division, created by the incursions of Pentecostal Protestantism in what was a relatively unquestioned group identity of Roman Catholics.

So it makes sense, as Mark suggests, that we expect theoretical innovation from places where the group is more central to understanding behavior, where villages and not nuclear (and often fractured) families raise children, where higher-status groups often feel the obligation to care personally for the less fortunate in lands without safety nets, and where those who ascend to representative offices beyond the village are expected to care for those left behind with largesse (corrupt or not).

Many of these societies recognize the role of the ancestors, or of various spirits, in enforcing community norms and in punishing those who deviate from these norms. They are "unscientific," which makes the efforts to understand them scientifically problematic. How would survey research into voting behavior account for the role of spirits in determining what is valuable for the community's – as opposed to the individual's – desires? How would political economy, an approach that emerged from the necessity to explain activities in the wake of the aborning Industrial Revolution, deal with barter economies, the markets of Turkey, Africa, or Southeast Asia, where most people are still unengaged in this revolution, let alone that of the postindustrial society? Western media may crow about a global village, but most villages in the world are still disconnected from the bulk of the globe. Techniques developed in Western societies have little purchase in places so cut off. Villages are atomistic, self-reliant, mutually supportive, in ways that are absent in Western societies. And even when pockets of such conditions exist in Western societies (and they do in most cases), these are conveniently ignored by

research that assumes a national, if not global, application of theoretical constructs that would be bedeviled by recognizing them.

MARK I anticipate a new synthesis of ethics and theory, moral courage and ontological vision, cultural clarity and anthropological depth. Such a synthesis does not conspire in a day. Intellectual ferment and steady institutional support are required, over time, to bring such a synthesis to pass. Broad learning and wide dialogue precede it. A "critical" community enriches it. An academic climate of curiosity sustains it. The new synthesis is likely to show itself most poignantly as emerging departments far from the normal scholarly crossroads discover that regional needs are primed for deeper reflection. Where and when, we shall see. Thomas Jefferson once observed, as a comment to British elites' noses being pinched at perceived intellectual chaos in the early American republic: "How long did it take European countries to produce one great poet? Almost a thousand years in the case of each European language and culture" (Morgan, 2011, p. 25). The new synthesis we project may not keep pace with the demands of instantaneous culture, but we await with some anticipation the emergence of new vocabularies pressing toward, and reaching, theoretical plateaus not yet discovered. Scholarly ventures, even in these volumes, boost hope and create expectation. Names here may be the distant kin of Berelson, Berlo, and Bleyer. Institutions in the developing sectors will not have attained some of the West's rigidities, the cocoons of recognized "knowledge," the fence lines that separate "ought" from "is" in much of the West. Where learning and public policy are sisterly projects, what one knows and how one lives form a natural partnership, which requires no qualifiers or apologies. Look for syntheses from schools on the cusp of hosting the annual association meetings, or from NGOs already committed to serviceable knowledge, with the welfare of marginalized people at stake. Intellectual life tends toward accumulating a knowledge base that gets increasingly fractured, small, and inconsequential. Doctoral dissertations must pave new ground, after all. From the emerging institutions – in the Middle East, South Africa, China – look for research and theory attached to the major issues of public life, defined and clarified by a new class of scholars just discovering the immense public responsibility of learning. "Peace-building" is such a theme, "nationalism" another; "terrorism" is a communicational field ripe for study. These volumes here provide keynotes for the future of the field.

ROBERT I hope Mark is right about this. Certainly both of us – if you know some of our previous work – would welcome the development of media and mass communication theory with a normative foundation. So much of the theory that has developed in the West has been norm-absent. This is due partly to the invasion of other considerations – public policy, interest group politics, fear of the unknown, the necessity to predict behavior – and partly to the studied avoidance of morality, in a desire to escape the taint of religion in the academy or to gain acceptance in a scientific culture where norms are unnecessary and perhaps intellectually suspect (except in the realms of philosophy or religion).

However, our indifference to the possible normative dimensions of theory has now put us in a bind. The rapid expansion of media technologies and the various uses to which they have been put, both by media organizations and by users, create, I think, a compelling necessity for theory to ask the question: "What are the media for?" Are they merely a set of delivery systems for people's amusement? It doesn't appear so. Are they to deliver information or knowledge, to facilitate communication, to help establish and maintain democracy, to equalize status, overcome language barriers, break down divisions among nations and make peace among them a possibility? Are they to give voice to those who have not been heard in the citadels of power? Or to equalize cultural traditions? Are they designed merely to open up the idea of free expression to all comers, regardless of the uses to which individuals or groups (hate-groups, advocates of genocide or racial superiority, propagandists, artisans, or cat lovers) may put such media capabilities? Are those who teach in the various subdisciplines of the media merely to provide the techniques for using the system, or are they also to inculcate humane values *à la* international conventions, so that the media and mass communication that result will serve some higher purpose than profit, popularity, or pederasty?

MARK There is likelihood that the next generation of mass communication theory will, like wrestlers, do a quick move and find that dominating themes are secondary and bottom themes are dominant. Political economy, for example, well handled here, has long been the voice of theory in Europe and is edgily strong in many American universities. Health communication – well, specialists go there and most findings remain there, circulate there, cannot compete in the center ring. Gender communication is rising quickly to a mainstay, likely due to its ubiquity and to the obvious resonance it has to a worldwide feminist movement. In places where corrupt economies are taken for granted, where the rule of law is punctured by the steady influence of greed and power, we expect to see points of light for a reconciliation with the common good in areas of culture that are fecund. Take, for example, such a simple communicational relationship as doctor and patient. One might say initially that both of them report what they know and, in the best scenario, they achieve improved health results. Or take such a significant communicational relationship as wife and husband. Or reader and columnist. Or parliamentarian and cartoonist. Each role creates messages and each pairing generates strings of shared messages, rippling in their secondary effects to audiences that are related, tangential, unpredictable. It is entirely possible for a new generation of theorists to raise the social capital of variables and research themes, nudging these themes toward more acute focus on the parts where people hurt most and on the hurts that can be bandaged now.

ROBERT The issue of relationship development and continuation via the media is one that has emerged from nowhere as a result of the application of the computer to connectivity through the Internet beginning in 1993. Even then, however, relationships were defined in physical space, email merely replacing the mailed letter.

The arrival of Web 2.0 around the turn of the millennium has elevated the issue of relationships via the media to new prominence. Researchers in various disciplines, from pediatrics to anthropology, from sociology to neuroscience, have been trying to determine just what differences occur as a result of relationships via media. And the situation is complicated by the fact that what used to be personal, dyadic relationships can now be more comprehensive, depending on what sites a person joins, what privacy protections are in place, who is accepted as friends, who is allowed to see posts, and how vigorously one's online connections use the wall posting, tagging, and sharing capabilities of the system. Relationships are not necessarily mutually defined but are subject to the definitions of others. Media and mass communication theory will likely struggle with such turns of events, especially since it is unlikely that these turns are now complete.

Relationships are also increasingly beset by issues of authenticity and truthfulness, and by the reality that people can create using various guises and disguises on different websites. Is there any "center" to identify in virtual worlds – or do they also fail to "hold," to return to Yeats? Does communication via the media require people to be who they claim to be and, if not, how does the expectation to know one's audience – which has long been a part of usual practice in the media – apply? Is that sage advice no longer relevant in our mediated age? And what does media theory have to offer on the issue of the rapid replacement of everyday experience – as the raw material for identity construction and maintenance – with mediated experience, as the hours of screen time rapidly jump with ubiquitous, mutually reinforcing technologies such as tablets, phablets, and phones? Research suggests that the most connected are the loneliest: the ersatz experience isn't as rich as the genuine – despite photo and video sharing, voice communication, and text capabilities of sites such as Facebook, and the following capabilities offered by Twitter and Instagram. If scholars were concerned about those "bowling alone," what have we to say about the millions who stare at screens alone, hoping for a connection with the distant other rather than pursuing authentic connections in the physical world, with those who can touch with more than glowing electrons? Our theory has not yet kept pace with these enormous shifts in practice.

Mark As the academy as a whole becomes enamored with neuroscience, communications theory must account for brain function, not merely for brain/mind influence or brain/behavioral effects. The field long ago dismissed the notion that messages operate like bullets – the well-targeted achieving spectacular results, as minds take shape in response to fear or fascination: carrots dangled and controlled by the progeny of Bernays' social engineers (Christians, 2012, p. 150). If Jonathan Haidt (2012) and many others from the neurosciences are correct, communications tasks are generated from hard-wired brain tissues that, oddly but surely, require reason and logic to explain, but not to initiate, the judgments and observations that govern how the self makes its way in the world. Most communications programs presently assume that a high degree of rational processing (vaguely understood) turns sound and gesture into meaningful statements

defining reality and thus maintaining selfhood in an equilibrium of competing others. Neuroscience is now such a major player in the social sciences – even in their interpretive and cultural version – that communication theory will increasingly use neuroscience to enrich its findings. The implications for political communication should be apparent, as they are for the persuasive sciences. Can brain texture and neural connections account for everything we say and do? Are treasured concepts such as freedom and responsibility – the twin towers of virtuous communication – artificial products of impulses beyond the reach of the self, as classically understood? Communication theory must engage.

Robert We can already speak about an "early" and a "later" neuroscience. In its early stages neuroscience was feared: some feared it could explain all human behavior. But now we know better. Although the brain is plastic – it changes over time as new neuronal pathways develop, others become more robust, and still others atrophy from little to no use – this is a result of environmental factors: what we do, what we read, what we encounter in everyday life. Those who read on tablets and those who read on paper excite different parts of the brain. Those who spend large amounts of time online develop parts of the brain that those who live offline do not (and vice-versa). Research such as Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows* has begun to show the differences (see Carr, 2010). Understanding the changes that occur will take some research traditions into somewhat uncharted territory. For instance, if those who become more aggressive as a result of media attention are those who are already predisposed to aggression, how might that conclusion inform our approach to the neurological realities of screen time? Consider those whose neuronal pathways are most affected by interactions via the media: are these people affected because of their predisposition to seek information, relationships, or entertainment in that form, or is the form so compelling that it overrides any predisposition to accomplish these tasks using alternative means? Genetics doesn't require people to use the web or to watch television. So why do they do so? And once they have done so, what is at work such that they gradually replace other forms of human interaction, knowledge seeking, and entertainment slaking with screen representations? Is it weak will? The necessity of convenience? Laziness? Intellectual curiosity? It seems that uses and gratifications research has more to do, as well as agenda setting, or psychologically informed approaches. Neuroscience, we are all relieved to know, doesn't put us out of business.

Mark Communication theory and jurisprudence are rarely found in the same university department, but their core questions are identical and, for public communication (mass communication), their mutual contributions are stronger together than apart. The now adolescent economic theory of law begs for a broader and more humane theory of the self, which is to say, an ideology of the self as speaker, an ideology capable of withstanding assaults that diminish the self to mere mammal, a maker of sound but expressive of no more than various hungers. Law everywhere constrains the reach of public communication. Why should it?

Constrained on whose moral or political preferences? Constrained with what available remedies or possibilities for innovation? Constrained – and managed – on authority to what principle of freedom or telos? Occasional shots by activist governments to curtail the reach of the Internet are sure-fire evidence that the need for theories describing and transforming the public phenomena called law and communication is upon us – all those who treasure the notion that humanity leads the pack. Tom Bingham, legal scholar and liberal democrat *par excellence*, writes that the rule of law, at its core, is the principle "that all persons and authorities within the state, whether public or private, should be bound by and entitled to the benefit of laws publically made" (Bingham, 2010, p. 8). An excellent principle. Yet communication theory can add more applied wisdom to the principle than law alone is able to explain and justify.

Robert I have long been intrigued by the eighteenth-century question: "What makes society possible?" Before the revolutions began to rock the world stage in the latter part of that century, it was not a question that needed to be asked. What made society possible was the coercive power vested in aristocratic elites who passed along authority through bloodlines, intermarriage, and raised armies of mercenaries to keep everyone else in line (to over-generalize). But once the bite of democracy took hold, the question became important. Democracy equalized rich and poor, the educated and the illiterate, in societies that needed some basis to cohere – and in the Western tradition this became the law. The early American republic was to be a society of law, not men. People were self-serving, biased, untrustworthy. The law, however, was neutral where all people were created equal (never mind women and racial minorities at that time). The law did not play favorites. Nor did it look with disdain on those who were without property or title. It was a solid defense against tyranny and a guarantor of democratic values.

The law, with its two variants (English common law and Roman civil law), was globalized through the expansion of European empires. British colonies inherited the common law tradition. French, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies inherited the civil law tradition. Usually, however, the law was not enough to make societies in these transplanted areas possible. The law contended with more entrenched and accepted means and often became merely a pliable mechanism in the hands of corrupt legislators and executives – although they were practicing the ancient means of survival. So, when coups and revolutions shook these newly independent entities from the mid-twentieth century on, one of the first targets was the national radio or television station. What made society possible, and change in society possible, was control of the symbolic apparatus that legitimized the new reality: the power to say who was in control, how dissent would be handled, how history would be told.

But media can also be disruptive and destabilizing. Social media have been put to work by various groups, from the protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square to the activities of the Occupy Movement worldwide, of Wikileaks, and of the hacktivist group Anonymous. The United Nations puts radio to work in the process of peace

building even as other groups put it to work to encourage and justify genocide. Again, we return to the issue of what the media are for. What do we expect of them, what constitutes them, and how do we hold them to a standard that would result in the rule of law more than of chaos? Theory is the means by which we must discover answers to these questions.

Mark Theory and workplace need more cordial companionship. The ethics–workshop link is celebrated in journal, book, and essay, speech, conference, and professional code. Theory, less so. As workplaces take a new form and journalism as a profession and industry is adapting to competitive market pressures, theory and research are needed to assess the information value of the new form, the changes to the meaning and perceptions of communications functions, and the impact of all this on the public sphere. "Second-nature" practices of journalists orient the reporter to their "primary mission of gathering and reporting the news objectively, fairly, and fully" (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001, p. 185). These values have been honored in journalism since its professional associations were organized in the early twentieth century. At the same time, universities began to recognize that news reporting was a public trust requiring special skills and a sophisticated public mission. The Missouri School of Journalism in 1908 was the first to try inculcating those special skills and mission. But, even the year before, Sigma Delta Chi, which later became the Society of Journalists, began to shape the set-apart and moral identity of a communications "profession." What is that public mission? How is its fulfillment measured? Are there actual gains toward a more just society, realized from truthful, probing, and balanced third-person accounts of decisions made by courts and corporations? What can "objective" mean in the blogosphere, where more and more younger citizens find and make their "news"?

The period after World War II was marked by the invention of the 24-hour news service (CNN) and of the "new journalism" – personalized, literary reporting from notables such as Truman Capote and Tom Wolfe. Now we are all too aware that the hunger for stories on cable news channels requires every bit of the creativity used by Capote and Wolfe, with consequences for privacy (a decreasing "right") and objectivity. No one argues that MSNBC on the left and FOX News on the right hoist their ratings with news that is commentary, and commentary that is spin, and spin that skates frequently close to campaigning. Does news freighted by ideology produce discerning citizen-patriots or confused and propagandized partisans? Communications research was never more important to the fragile futures of democratic politics. As to the styles of reporting that contemporary audiences seem most willing to imbibe, recent revelations about Capote's "true-to-life" journalistic accounts poke massive holes in our confidence concerning the new (old) journalism. Clearly the master essayist-reporter did not try hard enough, was not on the street, did not press and pursue the data (Helliker, 2013, p. A1). Case-study research on new reportage will undergird the value of news genres or will reverse their negative influence. With globalism a modern fact of existence, people everywhere need greater confidence that the "random irradiations and resettlements"

of their ideas cohere to actualities (James, 1890, vol. 2, p. 638; quoted in Lippmann, 1961/1922, p. 16). One of the early theorists of journalism, Walter Lippmann, wrote that "the way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do" (1961/1922, p. 25). His observation, still replete with wisdom, needs a new round of research and subsequent theorizing if we are to understand the new "man/woman" in the digitized era.

ROBERT Our press theories – whether from the Hutchins Commission, from Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's (1984/1956) *Four Theories of the Press*, from John Nerone's (1995) update, or from Christians, Fackler, and Ferre's (1993) *Good News* – all emerged at a time when what we now call the traditional media were in their heyday. The world seemed settled: press theory could be stated with confidence. As we all know, those days are past. Uncertainty rules – will journalism survive and, if so, in what form? Newspapers are disappearing. Newsmagazines are retreating to an online-only presence. Television audiences for news are shrinking, except for the reporting of the most spectacular events. So-called "citizen journalism" is ascendant. Even the major news networks, from the BBC to CNN, will run reports from untrained reporters "on the spot" rather than trying to play catch-up by sending in teams to cover outbreaks of violence, insurrections, intifadas, demonstrations, and sit-ins, once they have begun. Gatekeepers are not what they once were. Events overtake them and reduced news staffs and budgets prevent them from giving the robust responses that once were commonplace. It is now location, location, location. Those who are on the scene achieve credibility merely by virtue of being on the scene. To fill the 24-hour news cycle, those who at one time controlled the reporting of events are now at the mercy of those who are participants in the events. And technology now gives people access to the formerly protected backfeeds that provide the raw, unedited, and rehearsed backstory for much of the news that is crafted by spin and PR. Press theory will have to be rewritten wholesale to account for such changes.

MARK "It's also necessary to completely falsify history," Noam Chomsky (2002/1991, p. 35) wrote ironically. He warned against the insidious influence of "constant infusions" of propaganda administered by PR professionals on behalf of a state power largely indifferent to public voices. Chomsky's sentiments are widely shared. Edward Bernays put PR on the academic agenda, then undercut public trust in it through advocacy of such themes as Chomsky warns against. Political campaigns, Bernays believed, "must carefully allocate to each of the media … the work it can do with maximum efficiency" (Bernays 2005/1928, p. 118). Today universities offering j-schools would be out of business if their programs did not also cater to interests in the far more lucrative, if not more secure and predictable, careers in PR. At the same time as universities turn their trained elites out on the marketplace, they must fashion a research and a theory-building regimen on the persuasion industries, so to speak. Most ironically, the current edition of Bernays' classic work *Propaganda*, features a front-cover blurb by Chomsky himself as

endorsement. Solid research will both illuminate the wisdom of the mind–message conundrum and distinguish its value for the common good.

Robert Unfortunately, research in or on PR has too often been about technique. There is little by way of actual critical theory on it and little sustained analysis of its impact on public knowledge of important matters. Partly this is due to the vagueness of the concept itself. Al-Jazeera did a news report on Mexican drug cartels' "PR" activities that involved staging executions and hanging opponents from bridges for maximum exposure – and timing their "releases" to assure maximum coverage by the Mexican media. Only later – one broadcaster admitted – did his station recognize that it was being used. PR. We might object to such audacious tactics on ethical or moral grounds, but is it so easy to distinguish such acts from those of political candidates who likewise seek to control their "image" by faking "exclusive" press conferences with a series of local TV stations that then trumpet these exclusives as part of their PR campaigns, knowing that their audience is unlikely to know the event was staged – Daniel Boorstin's famous "pseudo-event"? Or is taking the video news report (VNR) produced by a PR firm on behalf of a client, all dressed up in the station's own style so that it can fit seamlessly into a news program, any different from running a live report on a conflict and integrating video shots taken by one of the protesters on his mobile telephone? News reporters don't distinguish one from the other – they are all part of the stream of information made available for screening.

Theory has little to say on such matters to date. Yet such practices must impact on either press theory or PR theory, perhaps both – unless they are actually indistinguishable, given the changes that have occurred in the creation, distribution, and consumption of news, commentary, and analysis by the public. Certainly there are implications, too, for democratic theory. Theorizing has not kept up with practice.

Mark Technology is nearly its own justification. "The computer screen bulldozes our doubts with its bounties and conveniences. It is so much our servant that it would seem churlish to notice that it is also our master," writes Nicholas Carr (2010, p. 4), famous for his widely published essay "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" Marshall McLuhan, media sage, believed that humans processing the media are doing something far more significant than merely mastering their contents. McLuhan's sagacity once ruled over communication theory, until observers noted that, if the sage was right, then research is largely pointless – its claims, no matter how data-based and wise, would have been subsumed to the overwhelming influence of its mediated convergence. We need not review the tradition of technological determinism (hard or soft), which has sparked such a debate concerning the real neurosocial effects of communications media. Essayists like Carr raise the right issues with sufficient frequency to remind researchers who specialize in technology that the work is perennial. When patterns of media usage change (when are they ever immobile?), research will need to isolate the consequences. Video gaming and youth? Mobile phones and business development? Internet and libraries? Twitter

and conversation and selfhood? Technological innovation is perhaps the greatest wonder of modernity; we know too little about how it is reshaping human life, and less still about how it should. The research–theory grid is wide and long at this point. McLuhan, Innis, Carr, and others present seminal insights and suggest primal questions. If research in technology and society seems temporarily sated in the West, go East and go South. There find fertile fields among emerging democracies and submerging hegemonies. The research "fallout" of the Arab Spring, technology, aspiration, the public sphere renewed – all are in gestation.

ROBERT Harold Innis once wrote that every empire based its legitimacy – at least in part – on a monopoly of knowledge and that any threat to that empire would emerge on its fringes and challenge that dominant monopoly with a new means of communication. The shah of Iran's monopoly of knowledge was threatened from an unlikely source: audio tapes of sermons smuggled into the country and recorded by a relatively unknown cleric named Khomeini. An Egyptian Google employee helped initiate the Arab Spring through social networking – which the Mubarak government was ill prepared to deal with and, when it became able, it was too late. The revolution had moved to texts and tweets. Even then, however, most of the organization of protests occurred through word of mouth – the most non-technological method of communicating. We must wonder, once the all-encompassing, globalized, ubiquitous, mainstream, mobile, user-generated, PR-driven, advertising-infused, celebrity-obsessed, and trivialized media have reached every person on the planet, where empires – and what empires – will be threatened, and by what means. Is it possible that the few multimedia corporations that currently control mainstream content will likewise be able to add to their portfolios those media that they don't currently own? If so, and if the technologies now under discussion – wearable computers, heads-up display devices permanently connected via WiMax networks, brain-controlled prostheses, robots, driverless cars, and remotely piloted aircraft – come to be, can *1984* (ironically) be close behind? These are media as surveillance devices *par excellence*. Building on one of the classical expectations of journalism – surveillance – everyone on the planet becomes a roving, connected source of downloadable information to be processed, reconstructed, and re-presented to the rest of the world without even knowing it. And if quantum physics is right – if reality is consciousness and all consciousness is connected through entanglement – has communication lost its way? At one level communication and the symbolic construction process enabled by it (and through which civilization was built) defined our humanity; but new technologies, themselves entangled in an unbroken web of connectivity and having human beings as their nodes, make the opposite possible: dehumanization, the interface of man and machine, media communication being the essential link that constrains consciousness and directs human behavior (talk about drones!). An apocalyptic vision to be sure.

MARK The World Congress on Communication for Development in 2006 produced a telling report. Millennial Development Goals (MGDs), the well-known eight

concrete goals for overcoming poverty, prejudice, rights abuse, hunger, and other ills (see un.org/milleniumgoals), were reported to be inadequately understood. Moreover, the proper communication of the goals between aid agencies, governments, and researchers – meanings, interpretation, strategies for implementation – was simply insufficient. The US Congress called on all parties to clarify and articulate goals and their step-by-step attainment before committing more resources, even feeding the maw of corruption with more programs and spending (McAnany, 2012, pp. 126–127).

Few world movements can arouse generous participation as overcoming hunger, eradicating malaria, or mitigating HIV-AIDS do. There simply exist no arguments to the contrary, no credible advocates for sustaining the blight of these miseries. Only lack of clarity and efficiency softens the blunt power of the message and diminishes willingness to work. Research is needed, not only on the problems themselves, medical–agricultural–biological. Communications research directed to the MGDs is a research project that rightly appeals to all of the world's communities.

C. Wright Mills, three years before his death, offered the academy his analysis of sociological (and, by adoption and inference, communications) research, its poles (abstracted empiricism and grand theory), and a call for research that develops a "quality of mind that will help them [peoples bounded by limited communication] to use information and develop reason in order to achieve lucid understanding of what is going on in the world" – and to improve their lot in it (Mills, 1959, p. 9). Mills urged the grand theorists to "get down from their useless heights" (p. 42) and empiricists to cease ignoring history, biography, culture, and language in their own truncated vision of inquiry (p. 65). Mills advocated an approach that produces complex and actionable research; he called it "the sociological imagination." The ideal to be achieved was social change for human flourishing. The track to be avoided was bureaucratic or administrative research funded by elite agencies whose interest at base had little relevance to progress. Forerunner Mills, RIP, your call is still salient. The treacheries of funding and the realities of need are not lessened with the passing of a half-century plus. Communications research has its important vision to contribute to focusing world resources on alleviating the desperation of the bottom billion (Collier, 2007).

Robert This, of course, is a humane vision – and a responsive one vis-à-vis the earlier question of what media is for. It integrates normativity with theory, calls for praxis and not merely abstract theory, and challenges academics to respond to the realities of their age – an age that, despite enormous human progress, still suffers from a media/communication/digital divide. But, as I've said above, there is no reason to trust that the future we are creating for ourselves is necessarily benign, or that, when mutual and universal connection is available, that we will be as much a victim as a creator. What are the media for? How should we introduce students not merely to the necessities of practice, but to the moral dimensions of using knowledge and technology for the benefit of humankind? What theoretical constructs will take us to that place of non-manipulation, truthful communication,

reconciliation, and equality? And what constructs will take us otherwise to places we may well like to avoid?

MARK Games shape us, humor communicates, symbol reaches beyond literacy, images evoke as words do not. Chapters in these volumes have drawn new connections between public information and cartoons, dress and politics, icon and commitment, slogan and ideology, information sharing and privacy. New pairings may lead to new paradigms. An unexpected correlation may prompt a review and renewal of established theory.

There is an aspect of originality and curiosity that weaves throughout the theory-building enterprise. Two volumes of published theory in books finely boxed and artistically presented (as these are) should never be taken to comprise the corpus. Instead, these two volumes signal a report, a collection, and a summary. These chapters outline boundaries to theory only insofar as current research has cast the net and examined the catch. Boundaries are described in order to be redrawn, articulated again, or overthrown in a revolution (Kuhn, 1962). Theories in these volumes should not be received as "last word," but as looking forward to the future. Let your use of them be imaginative and speculative, as protein to muscle or spark to neuron. Find in these chapters the next overture of your research agenda (the term sounds laborious, but it means simply the human quest). From this worldwide gathering of theory, shape the next meeting.

A former political leader in East Africa called his administration the Nyayo era: follow the steps of the prior regime, but do take steps. No standing still. As it turned out, his Nyayo philosophy developed a very bitter flavor when Nyayo turned destructively oppressive. Political back-steps and failure of vision demoralized a lush idea. It was not the first time in the history of political and communication theorizing that a fecund idea went moldy. Nonetheless, we like the concept of Nyayo as a way to express a scholarly community's appreciation for a tradition of influential research turning into its second century of growth. Our invitation to globally energized protean communities is to generate the next collection of humanly useful communication theory.

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